

“More Like the Master”!

Romans 6: 15-23

Introduction

- Introduce self as one of four almost new Pastors – all of whom are “new to role” and “works in progress”!
- Brief Intro to Bergman Family
- The story behind me standing in front of you now!
- The asks.....
 - The first ask - Tommy asks the four of us in a text message if any of the “new guys” wants to preach on Dec 28 when I’m gone; No response.....
 - The next ask....Text to me personally a few days later when I was out fishing – “the Big Ask; would you be interested.....? About 10 seconds to consider and I respond: “Not Really”. Maybe 30 minutes later, I’m feeling a little guilty so I text back – “maybe that was a little hasty; I’m rethinking how I should respond”. That nibble was about all it took; Tommy set to the hook on a Marlin and here we are!!
- Why the reluctance?
 - Pastor Tommy is gifted AND a master at preaching/teaching - a tough act to follow or imitate. There’s no escaping it – I’m gonna compare myself to him and you are too. How closely can I follow/imitate him?! That’s the moment we are in!!!
- But, as we dive back into Romans 6 today, we’re going to find that if we are followers of Jesus Christ, we have an infinitely greater example to follow or imitate – Jesus Himself as our new Master!

Romans 6: 15-23 (OIA)

- Brief review of Romans so far:
 - Righteousness of God
 - Unrighteousness of ALL people
 - Grace of God through Jesus Christ Who credits believers with righteousness (justification.....)
 - Summary- humanity’s unrighteousness contrasted with God’s Gift of Righteous; Freedom from sin’s tyranny
 - For followers of Christ “live the new life – last week, first ½ of this chapter in message Tommy entitled “Dead to Sin; Alive in Christ”..... Continuing on!!

15 – “Should we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? Absolutely not!”

- Should sound familiar..... Rom 6: 1; Why the emphasis when written to believers at church in Rome – repeated and exclamation point!?
- The realities:
 - Christ won the war over sin but there’s a continuing daily battle with sin in this broken world where Satan is still active and now targeting followers of Jesus. Paul is moving on to tell how to live the new life IN CHRIST while still capable of sinning – now that we have a choice and are no longer “dead to sin”
 - AND False teaching at time - Some false teaching at time that “go ahead and sin because God will forgive and He’ll somehow use it for His Glory! A real stretch and wrong thinking..... Kinda like “Don’t bother with permission; just ask for forgiveness if wrong and caught”
 - Jesus has me covered so why should I care? Rationalizing sin?! Wrong perspective!!!

- Remember what He did for us! We are to be “new” creations; do nothing different doesn’t sound “new” but “old”
- 2 Cor 5: 17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!*

Consideration:

1. Take Responsibility

- Christ followers are credited with righteousness for eternity but don’t always act righteous (i.e., we still sin!)
- Consider the cost of the forgiveness I claim
- Take responsibility for and action to sin less

➤ Transition: Believers are credited with righteousness (Romans 4-5) and have access to a new life NOW; live it! But how?? Paul is going to use some contrasts to convey how to live more righteously.

16— Don’t you know that if you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of that one you obey – either of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness?

- Paul is going to describe the “old life” vs “new life in Christ” with some contrast using slavery as an example
 - Controversial even then but something the people understood (Verse 19a); some in church in Rome were likely slaves at the time!
 - Historical Context: slavery in Roman Empire at that time..... (“SERVANTS”); In the first century AD, thirty+ % of population Roman Empire were slaves of some kind.
 - Slavery played an important role in the society and economy of ancient Rome. Some were slaves against their will, with little hope for freedom. Believe it or not, others were skilled and educated slaves including artisans, chefs, entertainers, business managers, accountants and bankers, educators, secretaries and librarians, civil servants, and physicians—they actually chose this life for various reasons and could hope to obtain freedom through one of several well-defined paths with protections under the law. It seems Paul is focused on those who chose slavery in his discussion here.
- Paul is stating a fact – everyone is either a slave of sin which leads to death (eternal separation from God) or, for followers of Christ, a slave of obedience leading to righteousness – choices with dramatically different outcomes for eternity.

17 – But thank God that, although you used to be slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching to which you were handed over, 18 – and having been set free from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness. 19 – I am using a human analogy because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you offered the parts of yourself as slaves to impurity, and to greater and greater lawlessness, so now offer them as slaves to righteousness, which results in sanctification.

- “BUT.....” contrasting old and new lives.....
- Believers “Used to be....” – something changed; something BIG changed/is changing
- Believers should “offer themselves as slaves to righteousness which results in sanctification”. What’s does being sanctified involve?! First time for word in Romans....

- **Be Sanctified**
 - **Definition:** the action of making holy and process of being freed from sin and purified
 - **Picture:** Melting of metal, which when liquified, is cast into mold to take a new form – the righteousness of God
- What's my motivation to be sanctified? New Freedom under a new Master, Jesus Christ, with different plans for your life than any other earthly master
 - Example of story in Post and Courier a couple of weeks ago about recently released prisoner of 15 years in SC – adjusting to new life is not necessarily easy or instantaneous just because one has been “set free”

Consideration

2. Claim Your New Freedom

- Realize that everyone is a slave to someone/something
- Accepting Christ as Savior means that I have a new Master and I no longer have to sin
- Am I willing to be remolded as a new creation?

Transition: But, living this new life (acting more righteously) isn't automatic

20 – For when you were slaves to sin, you were free with regard to righteousness. 21–So what fruit was produced then from the things you are now ashamed of? The outcome of those things is death. 22 – But now, since you have been set free from sin and have become enslaved to God, you have your fruit, which results in sanctification – and the outcome is eternal life!

- Another “BUT.....!!!
- “Sanctification” – there it is again by Paul but this time he adds “and the outcome is eternal life”
 - Note the exclamation point!!
- “Become enslaved to God....” again!?
 - “Become” – active tense; a process!
 - Goal? Be “More Like the Master” (old Hymn!) - Follow/imitate Christ’s example – He really was the God/Man and dwelt among us. Worth following/imitating!!!!
- Super Bowl #60 is coming soon, with a host of commercials to get our attention; one from 2020 for which my nephew was part of the team who made this one. So, I know a little more about it and it’s a pretty good one for Rocket Mortgage
 - 2020 Rocket Mortgage Super Bowl Commercial with Jason Momoa
 - Message? You need your own place where you can be yourself and Rocket Mortgage can help make that happen for you.
 - The process: through technology and human effort (lots!), Jason Momoa and his “double” were made to look and act essentially as one; superb imitation
- For believers, only God can truly change us to be like Him and it has little if anything to do with our physical looks. In *Phil 2: 5*, Paul wrote “*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*” it’s really about how we think!
- Our brains really are capable of being rewired and, in fact, it happens all the time – sometimes knowingly but many times not.
 - Describe my example of learning to bat left handed – I had to think differently to act differently

- Rewiring is at heart of why rehabilitation can be useful for regaining functionality or learning new functionalities; BUT, one must go to the appointments, do the exercises, etc.!
- So, sitting on the sidelines of this “sanctification process” is really not an option for follower/disciple of Jesus Christ; we have to be “in the game” “and the outcome is eternal life”!! Why? Chance to live the resurrected life NOW!
 - That was me for way too long! Share my testimony from age 7 to 27 about “Getting in the Game” or taking seriously becoming sanctified or discipled)

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

- In short, the worst news and the best news all in one statement! The most significant “but” in the Bible!?
- The choice we have is presented again by Paul – literally a dead end without Christ
- Eternal life (again!) is a gift but when – once received, will I “unwrap the whole gift” and start to experience/enjoy at salvation??
 - *John 3: 16 For God loved the world in this way that He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life*
 - *Two outcomes – “not perish” and “have eternal life”*
- Unfortunately, some of us claim the crucifixion but don’t move to the resurrected life because eternal life starts at the moment of our salvation!
- Even better than the “40,000 ft view”, believers should think bigger and adopt an “eternal view/perspective”. Should cause us to consider and see things differently!

Consideration

3. Get in the Game

- **Become More Intentional About Knowing and Imitating Christ**
 - **Don’t just watch from the press box**
 - **Don’t assume that you have to go it alone**
 - **Use Your Resources:**
 - **Scripture and Holy Spirit dwelling and guiding from within** (Ps 119: 105; Holy Spirit “tabernacled” within us)
 - **Church family – Growing Together**
 - LCG’s
 - Discipleship Groups
 - **Observing God at work in others**
 - **Adopt a wider view when making life decisions**
 - **Does what I’m considering doing/not doing matter for eternity?**

Conclusion - Who is Your Master and How Closely Are You Following?

- Jesus Himself said: **“No man can have two masters”** (Matthew 6: 24)
- Likely some here are still slaves to sin for which Paul said..... wages (for eternity) are death; but you don’t have to be because freedom IS available through a gift from God because Jesus, You need to take the gift and unwrap it to experience and live a new life of freedom that you didn’t know before that comes with an eternal promise!
- For believers, following Him more closely likely means we need help working on a few things that are lingering from our former master because we don’t yet think or act with total righteousness. Very likely, we know what those lingering problems are and it’s really a matter of cooperating with him to Be Sanctified.

- Read lyrics of "He's Still Working on Me"

He's Still Working on Me

*He's still working on me
To make me what I need to be
It took him just a week to make the moon and stars
The sun and the earth and Jupiter and Mars
How loving and patient He must be
'Cause He's still workin' on me*

*There really ought to be a sign upon my heart
Don't judge him yet, there's an unfinished part
But I'll be better just according to His plan
Fashioned by the Master's loving hands
He's still working on me.....*

*In the mirror of His word
Reflections that I see
Makes me wonder why He never gave up on me
But He loves me as I am and helps me when I pray
Remember He's the potter, I'm the clay
He's still working on me
To make me what I need to be
It took him just a week to make the moon and stars
The sun and the earth and Jupiter and Mars
How loving and patient He must be
'Cause He's still workin' on me*

- Song has special meaning to me for a couple of reasons; First, played almost every night when our two boys (maybe ages 6-10) went to bed – these truths are stuck in my head in song mode! Even before I knew the song, though, when I was 20, I had a brain aneurysm/cerebral hemorrhage which immediately got my attention, changed some of my/our plans and caused me to think hard about what I was doing with my life, largely without letting Him “work on me”. Not many survive a cerebral hemorrhage (then or now) but I did because, apparently, he wasn’t finished with me here. And, He’s still working on me to make me what I need to be.....!
- I’ll be down front as we close and glad to speak with anyone who wants to know more about the gift of salvation that caused Paul to write what we studied today about a new life in Christ. The invitation is open to most importantly, anyone who hasn’t claimed a new life in Christ but is also for believers who holding back on living their new life in Christ. Of course, your opportunity to respond (whatever that is for you) isn’t limited to right now because God is “open for business 24/7/365”. But, there is no time like the present to get right with Him. You respond however you need.