

1. **Introduction:** Paul's response to the question – shall believers continue to deliberately sin after being justified by Christ's imputed righteousness through grace by faith.
2. **Romans 6:14-23:** *For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.* <sup>15</sup> *What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!* <sup>16</sup> *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?* <sup>17</sup> *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,* <sup>18</sup> *and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.* <sup>19</sup> *I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. 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.* <sup>20</sup> *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.* <sup>21</sup> *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.* <sup>22</sup> *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.* <sup>23</sup> *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
  - His answer is based on the concept of “dominion.” “To have dominion over someone” implies being in a position of supreme authority over them. Salvation is by grace through faith that accepts the truth that Christ has satisfied the Law's requirements for every person who believes.
  - Each believer is freed from seeking salvation through obedience to the Law, but they must obey God's moral law which is determined by His character.
  - Shall a person, who is freed from the requirement of perfect obedience to the Law of Moses by God's grace, sin because they are under grace? Paul says, “**By no means!**”
  - He introduces the analogy of slaves to illustrate the obedience required of believers from their union with Christ. The specific variety of slavery he has in mind is called “voluntary slavery.” At first that sounds contradictory, but it was a fact of life in Paul's world.
  - There were indeed many involuntary slaves, some were war captives, and some purchased from other owners. But there were also people in great need who voluntarily became someone's slave simply to have food and shelter. They sold themselves to be able to survive.
  - Such people would attempt to choose a desirable master. They would present themselves to their chosen potential master offering to become their slave. If accepted, once they became a slave, they had no choice except to obey their master.

- Believers owe Christ obedience because they belong to Him. He paid the redemption price for them with His life and death. Obedience to Christ is owed to Him because of what He has done.
  - Paul personifies “sin” saying sin is like a slave owner who commands his slaves to disobey God. In Adam everyone is fallen, controlled by sin, and, therefore, a slave to sin.
  - A person who voluntarily becomes a slave is as much a slave as those who are captured or purchased. All slaves are obligated to obey. A person who is a slave to sin is on a path that leads to eternal death.
  - There are times when a slave is transferred to a new master. When that happens, their obligation to obey the old master ends and their obedience must shift to the new master.
  - Through God’s grace, the gospel offers to free “slaves to sin” who will believe in the salvation work of Christ and commit in faith to be obedient to Christ as their new master.
  - In that sense, believers become volunteer slaves to Christ and His righteousness.
  - New believers have not sin, but Christ as their Master. Christ, as their new master, was crucified to pay the penalty for their sins as the price for being freed from slavery to sin.
  - Christ, their new Master, gives them the immediate reward of “justification” (declared legally righteous before God) based on the righteousness of Christ, their new Master.
  - Their new Master also sends the Holy Spirit to indwell them. The Spirit will work to transform the new slaves of Christ into a likeness of their Master.
  - The slave analogy is valuable but has obvious limits. Paul recognizes such limitations by saying that he is “speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations.”
  - The key to a believer’s slavery to Christ is their voluntary commitment to obedience.
3. **“Slave to Sin” or “Slave to Righteousness”**: Whether a person is a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness, their life conditions continually change.
- For slaves to sin, repeated sinning leads deeper and deeper into sinful reality and ultimately to eternal death and separation from God. A slave to sin is free from any constraints imposed by righteousness but receive the wage of death that they deserve.
  - Slaves to righteousness receive no wages. God gives them the free-gift that leads to sanctification and eternal life with Him (they receive what they are unable to deserve – grace, not justice.)
  - All believers were at one time slaves to sin. Through God’s grace, they have been called to willingly surrender to Christ, becoming a volunteer slave to Christ.
  - From being a slave to sin (to which all since Adam were born) to being a volunteer slave of Christ (to which we were “born again”) requires a binding moral commitment to righteousness.
  - Accusations that grace undermines ethical responsibility are to be firmly rejected. If the critics’ accusations about grace were right, grace would promote reckless sinning. That is nonsense.

- Baptism is a visible sign of a believer's union by faith with Christ. In conversion, a believer's inward self-surrender to Christ is a commitment to obedience which Paul says makes us "slaves to righteousness."
  - Inward conversion and outward baptism both indicate a radical discontinuity between our old pre-conversion, pre-baptism life and our new, post-conversion, post-baptism life.
  - A person justified through grace by faith will not continue in regular or routine sin because they have become a new creature in Christ and are being transformed by the Holy Spirit into a likeness of Christ (who is sinless).
  - Believers need to constantly remind themselves of who they are "in Christ." Remember the meaning and significance of our conversion, baptism, union with Christ in His death and resurrection, and that we are Christ's voluntary slaves committed to obey Him.
  - Like Jesus before him, Paul presents a picture of two types of lives, each totally opposed to the other. Jesus portrayed the distinction between the two types as the difference between a broad easy road that leads to destruction and a narrow more difficult road that leads to life (MT 7:13).
  - Paul identifies two types of lives, each opposed to the other, as two types of slavery.
  - By natural birth, believers were "in Adam" as natural slaves of sin. By God's grace, through the salvation work of Jesus, believers are "in Christ" and slaves to righteousness. That transfer was possible by Jesus' atoning death and resurrection.
  - As mentioned earlier, bondage to sin earns the wages of sin which ultimately is eternal death which means eternal separation from God.
  - Slavery to God yields the gift of God which leads to progressive holiness and ultimately to glorification (being made holy like Christ) and eternal life in the presence of God.
4. **Introduction to Romans 7:** Through the years, this chapter has been interpreted in several inconsistent ways. Most differences involve interpretation of 7:15-25. Taken out of context, some statements in these verses appear to contradict earlier statements made by Paul.
- A clear distinction between "justification" and "Fatherly forgiveness" is required to understand this chapter. Both terms are aspects of divine forgiveness.
  - Justification is the Father's "once for all" judicial forgiveness as Judge. Justification eliminates judicial guilt for sin but does not give experiential righteousness. Justified believers continue to have a sin nature and do sin.
  - God is displeased when justified believers' sin. Sins committed after justification are free from the eternal penalty due sin but continue to grieve the Father and have temporal consequences.
  - If a believer sins, they are to confess their sin and repent. God will grant "Fatherly forgiveness" (the second aspect of divine forgiveness). Justification eliminates sin's eternal penalty. Fatherly forgiveness deals with temporal issues of sin & may include chastening (Heb 12:5-11).

- Justification gives a once for all, unshakable, eternal, right-standing before the throne of divine judgment. The forgiveness a sinning believer seeks is not pardon from an angry Judge but mercy from a grieved Father. Fatherly forgiveness is ongoing and deals with here-and-now sins enabling a believer to continue in the process of their sanctification.
5. **Three Intervals of a Believer's Life:** (1.) The interval between physical birth and justification. (2.) The interval between justification and glorification. (3.) The interval after glorification.
- Sins happen in intervals (1.) and (2.). Our righteous Judge pardons the penalties due those sins when He declares each believer legally righteous before Him based on faith in Jesus.
  - In the third interval after glorification, believers are sinless and holy like Christ.
  - At the beginning of the second interval, when believers are justified, they receive a new nature and their sin nature's grip on them is loosened but not eliminated.
  - The new redeemed nature is inclined toward righteousness and enables a believer to "not sin." The residual sin nature battles with the new redeemed nature. Sin originates within us (Mk 7:21-22). Temptation is triggered by our own desires (James 11:13-15).
  - Consider the question: Who is most aware of sins' burden – the justified or unjustified?
  - John MacArthur says think of it this way. A burden of hundreds of pounds placed on dead person cannot be felt. No matter how heavy the burden of sin, an unregenerated person will not feel it because they are spiritually dead, but the spiritually alive redeemed will know their sin.
  - Awareness of the eternal significance of their sin is a good sign a person is regenerated.
  - A battle against sin must be waged throughout a believer's mortal life. There is comfort in knowing that battle has already been won by Jesus Christ.
  - Believers live in tension between two extremes – the new and the old – the holy and the sinful.
  - Physically, believers are Adam's progeny, but spiritually they are "in Christ" sharing in His death, burial, and resurrection.
  - As we move to a study of Romans 7, may God bless our study with understanding.
  - **Next:** Romans 7:1-6.