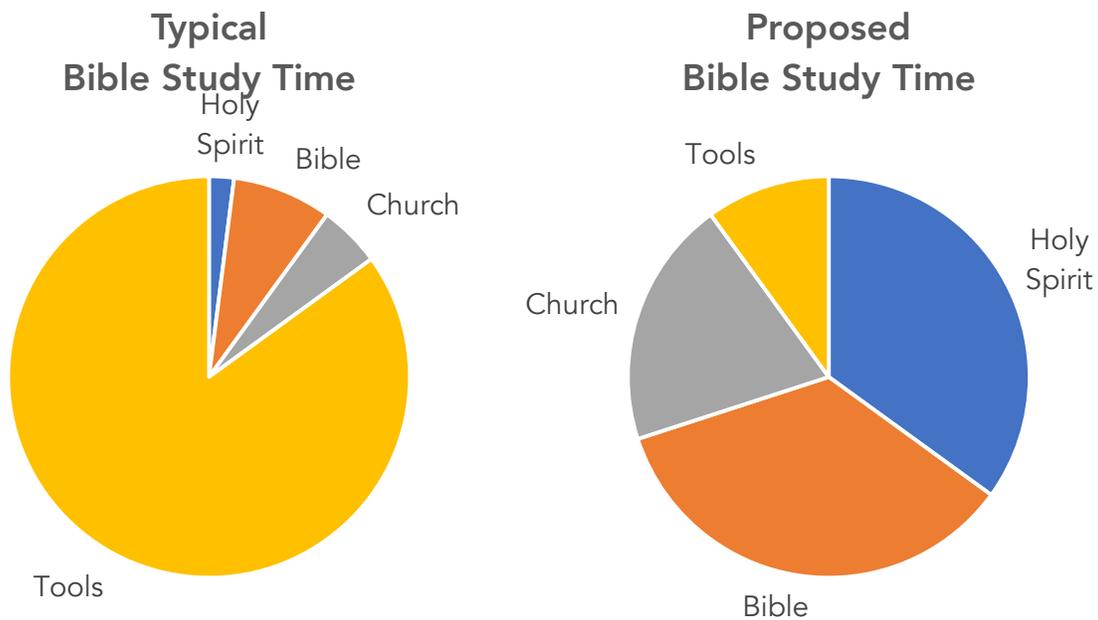


Romans

Slaves to Righteousness ([Romans 6:15-23](#))

Introduction

A gentle review: **Did we do this?** Spend more time with God and His Word than with anyone and anything else.



Our approach each week will be REAP (read, explain, apply, personalize).

Here's our outline of the book of [Romans](#) (summarized from the ESV's outline):

- ✓ Paul's Introduction & Righteousness Introduced ([1:1-17](#)) (three weeks)
- ✓ Righteous Wrath ([1:18-3:20](#)) (six weeks)
- ✓ Saving Righteousness ([3:21-4:25](#)) (three weeks)
- 4. Righteous Freedom ([5:1-8:39](#)) (post-Easter to July 4) (11 weeks)
- 5. Righteousness → Jews ([9:1-11:36](#)) (post July 4 to Labor Day) (eight weeks)
- 6. Righteous Living ([12:1-15:13](#)) (post Labor Day to October) (nine weeks)
- 7. Paul's Closing ([15:14-16:23](#)) (November to early December) (five weeks)
- 8. Righteousness Summarized ([16:25-27](#)) (December & wrap up) (two weeks)

Today's text ([Romans 6:15-23](#)) is the fourth part of this major section.

Peace with God through Faith

1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **4** and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, **5** and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— **8** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. **11** More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— **13** for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. **14** Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. **16** And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. **17** For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. **19** For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. **20** Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, **21** so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin, Alive to God

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? **2** By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? **3** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. **6** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. **7** For one who has died has been set free from sin. **8** Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **9** We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. **10** For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. **11** So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. **13** Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. **14** For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Read: Slaves to Righteousness (6:15-23)

15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! **16** 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? **17** 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, **18** and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. **19** 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.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. **21** 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. **22** 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. **23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Explain: Slaves to Righteousness (6:15-23)

Bible study is asking and answering questions about the text. Let's ask some questions.

Are there any literary/structural observations?

Paul brings a lot of hard truth in these verses and had been reminding me in the life of a Christian there is no middle ground. Jim said last week on the podcast that Paul starts to use the imperative mood in **Romans 6**, he only uses one in the verses we looked at last week. However, Paul uses the indicative or statements of fact **16** times in **Romans 6:15-23** alone. Like I said, a lot of truth!

What do the words mean and what are some observations of the text?

15 What then? Are we to sin [aorist active subjunctive (probability or possibility); missed the mark and not share in the prize, erred, sinned, offended, trespassed; same word used in **Romans 2:12** (twice); **3:23; 5:12, 14, 16** **because we are** [present middle indicative—**fact**] **not under law** [*nomos*] **but under grace** [*charis*]? **By no means** [second aorist active optative (possibility (more remotely possible than subjunctive)); to become, to come into existence, begin to be, receive being; same phrase used in **Romans 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11**]! **16 Do you not know** [perfect (completed action with the results continuing) active indicative; see, know] **that if you present** [present active indicative; stand beside, exhibit, proffer, recommend, substantiate, be at hand, aid; same as used in **Romans 6:13** (twice)] **yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves** [*doulos*; slave, bondservant; same word used in **Romans 1:1**], **you are** [present middle indicative] **slaves of the one whom you obey** [present active indicative; hear under, listen attentively, heed, conform; same as used in **Romans 6:12**], **either of sin** [offense, sin], **which leads to death, or of obedience** [attentive hearkening, compliance, submission, obedience; same as used in **Romans 1:5; 5:19**], **which leads to righteousness** [equity, justification, righteousness]? [Paul was not using the concept of slavery lightly here, he used it because he knew that this would be something that the Romans would be familiar with. He wanted a clear picture for them, so he tells them they are either slaves to sin or to obedience. The question is not, "Are we **slaves**?" but, "To whom are we **enslaved**?"] **17 But thanks** [*charis*; graciousness, acceptable, benefit, favor, gift, gracious, grace, joy, liberality, pleasure, thanks, thankworthy; same word used multiple times in **Romans**] **be to God, that you who were** [imperfect (action continually or repeatedly happening in past time) middle indicative] **once slaves** [*doulos*; slave, bondservant; same word used in **Romans 1:1; 6:16**] **of sin** [offense, sin] **have become obedient** [aorist active indicative; hear under, listen

attentively, heed, conform; same as used in [Romans 6:12, 16](#) **from the heart to the standard** [die, stamp, scar, shape, statue, style, resemblance, sampler, model, instance; same word used in [Romans 5:14](#) **of teaching** [instruction, doctrine] **to which you were committed** [aorist middle indicative; surrendered, yielded up, entrusted, transmitted, betrayed, brought forth, cast, committed, delivered, gave over, gave up, hazarded, put in prison, recommended; same word used in [Romans 1:24, 26, 28; 4:25](#); I grew up in the Methodist Church and most Sundays we would say our call to worship. The preacher would say, "Let us give thanks to the Lord, Our God," and the congregation would answer, "It is right to give Him our thanks and praise." Paul goes on to say they have become obedient from the heart . . . the heart is our core. We must serve Him from our very core with all that we are.], **18 and, having been set free** [aorist middle participle; liberated, exempted, delivered, made free] **from sin** [offense, sin], **have become slaves** [aorist middle indicative; not *doulos*, but *doulos* is the root word for this word; enslaved] **of righteousness** [equity, justification, righteousness; In this time slaves could be released from their masters, but at a cost. Usually this cost was paid to their master. In the case of slaves to Christ, our master paid the ultimate cost for our freedom.]. **19 I am speaking** [*lego*; present active indicative] **in human terms** [human, common to man], **because** [*dia*] **of your natural** [flesh, meat, body, human nature] **limitations** [feebleness, malady, frailty]. **For just as you once presented** [aorist active indicative; stand beside, exhibit, proffer, recommend, substantiate, be at hand, aid; same as used in [Romans 6:13](#) (twice), [16](#)] **your members** [limbs, parts of the body; same as used in [Romans 6:13](#) (twice)] **as slaves** [*doulos*; slave, bondservant; same word used in [Romans 1:1; 6:16, 17](#)] **to impurity** [impurity, uncleanness] **and to lawlessness** [illegality, violation of the law, wickedness, iniquity, transgression, unrighteousness; same word used in [Romans 4:7](#)] **leading to more lawlessness** [illegality, violation of the law, wickedness, iniquity, transgression, unrighteousness; same word used in [Romans 4:7](#) and earlier in [Romans 6:19](#)], **so now present** [aorist active imperative; stand beside, exhibit, proffer, recommend, substantiate, be at hand, aid; same as used in [Romans 6:13](#) (twice), [16](#), earlier in [19](#)] **your members** [limbs, parts of the body; same as used in [Romans 6:13](#) (twice), earlier in [19](#)] **as slaves** [*doulos*; slave, bondservant; same word used in [Romans 1:1; 6:16, 17](#), earlier in [19](#)] **to righteousness** [equity, justification, righteousness] **leading to sanctification** [purification, purity, purifier, holiness, sanctification]. [Mounce: Freedom is not a question of whether or not we would like to serve but the choice of which master we will serve. There is no middle ground. [Matthew 6:24](#) says "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." No two masters, there is no middle ground. We have to pick where our service goes, where our obedience goes, where our heart goes. In the commentary I am reading for [Romans](#), Hughes said, "Our past slavery only brought shame and

death." But our enslavement to God brings not only freedom from sin but sanctification and eternal life." Paul uses the imperative here, making it a command to present our members, to present ourselves fully and completely as slaves to righteousness that leads to sanctification.]

20 For when you were [imperfect (action continually or repeatedly happening in past time) middle indicative] **slaves** [*doulos*; slave, bondservant; same word used in [Romans 1:1](#); [6:16](#), [17](#), [19](#) (twice)] **of sin** [offense, sin], **you were** [imperfect (action continually or repeatedly happening in past time) middle indicative] **free** [unrestrained to go at pleasure, not a slave, exempt from obligation or liability, free, at liberty] **in regard to righteousness** [equity, justification, righteousness]. **21 But what fruit were you getting** [imperfect (action continually or repeatedly happening in past time) active indicative; holding, possessing] **at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed** [present middle indicative; feel shame for something, be ashamed]? **For the end** [limit, conclusion, result] **of those things is death** [In the movie *The Princess Bride* (and no, I did not get this reference from Jim) Fezzik and Inigo take Westley to Miracle Max. Miracle Max says that Westley is only, "Mostly dead." Miracle Max says, "There's a big difference between mostly dead and all dead. Mostly dead is slightly alive." He was saying there is still hope! And we being slaves to sin, were mostly dead but . . . we have a hope! Jesus! Jesus will always be our hope. He freed us from sin, from being mostly dead, and we now serve Him.]. **22 But now that you have been set free** [aorist middle participle; liberated, exempted, delivered, made free; same word used in [Romans 6:18](#)] **from sin** [offense, sin] **and have become slaves** [aorist middle participle; not *doulos*, but *doulos* is the root word for this word; enslaved; same word used in [Romans 6:18](#)] **of God, the fruit you get** [present active indicative; hold, possess] **leads to sanctification** [purification, purity, purifier, holiness, sanctification; same word used in [Romans 6:19](#)] **and its end** [limit, conclusion, result; same word used in [Romans 6:21](#)], **eternal** [perpetual, eternal, for ever, everlasting] **life** [Even if we are covered in grace, going back to [Romans 6:1](#) and [15](#). Even though we are covered and our debt is paid this does not give us free reign to sin. We should not choose the path to sin. In fact, we shouldn't even choose to visit the path to sin.]. **23 For the wages** [rations for a soldier, stipend, pay, wages] **of sin** [offense, sin] **is death, but the free gift** [gratuity, deliverance, endowment, qualification; same word as used in [Romans 5:15](#), [16](#)] **of God is eternal** [perpetual, eternal, for ever, everlasting; same word as used in [Romans 6:22](#)] **life in Christ Jesus our Lord** [odd, but there's no verb in [Romans 6:23](#)].

For this verse, I have always focused on the fact that we are all guaranteed either eternal life or death. However, after living with Paul for a week or two, I started focusing more on the wages and the *gift*. Wages are earned, something that we are due, but a gift is something we are freely given. Two paths and we must choose. There

is no middle ground. Both paths have hills, valleys, and rough places that are hard to cross. At the end of one path there is death; at the end of the other is righteousness. No matter how dirty, messy, or broken we are, at the end of the path leading to righteousness, the Savior, our Master, will look at us and say this one is Mine!

Let's go back and look at the 16 times Paul uses the indicative mood, or statements of truth or facts.

1. We are not under the law but under grace (6:15)
2. We know this (this information should not be a surprise; it might be a heart prick, but it shouldn't be a surprise) (6:16)
3. We are slaves to who we present ourselves to (6:16)
4. We are, right now and going forward (6:16)
5. We are slaves of the one we obey (6:16)
6. We were slaves of sin (6:17)
7. We are now obedient from the heart (6:17)
8. We are now committed to the teachings (6:17)
9. We are slaves of righteousness (6:18)
10. Paul brings this message to them on their level, there should be no excuse
11. We once presented ourselves to impurity leading to lawlessness (6:19)
12. We were slaves of sin (6:20)
13. We were free from righteousness (6:20)
14. We still presented fruit when slaves to sin (6:21)
15. We were ashamed of that fruit (6:21)
16. The fruit we get when slaves to God, leads to sanctification (6:22)

Two paths, one leads to death and the other to righteousness. We were slaves of sin, we yielded fruit that we are not ashamed of. We presented ourselves to impurity, leading to lawlessness. We then became obedient in our hearts. We committed to the teachings and the fruit we get leads to righteousness. We are slaves to Christ. There is no middle ground and we shouldn't even want to revisit the other path.

Apply (What is the point?)

1. There is no **middle ground**
2. See number 1
3. See number 2

Personalize (What do we do with that?)

1. Choose our **path**
2. Don't **visit**
3. **Serve** Christ

Next week: Released from the Law (7:1-6)

1 Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? 2 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

4 Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

Homework

Resources (our helps—order matters)

- Holy Spirit
- Bible: [Romans](#) (ESV)
- Church: bit.ly/FlemingSS
- Tools: bit.ly/romans2017

Our process

- Ask (the Holy Spirit for help)
- Read ([Romans](#))
- Talk (about [Romans](#)—bit.ly/romans2017group)
- Send (feedback to jim314@yahoo.com) by Wed)

Quotes & Observations

Darla Skinner (Mounce)

We have become slaves of God. And is there benefit in this? Most certainly! The reward for serving God is growth in holiness and, in the end, eternal life.

The word for "holiness" is *agiasmos*. Barclay reminds us that "all Greek nouns which end in *-asmos* describe, not a completed state, but a *process*. Sanctification is the road to holiness" (*Romans*, 91). A.M. Hunter writes that eternal life is "life with the tang of eternity about it" (*The Epistle to the Romans*, TBC [London: SCM, 1955], 68).

Jessica Norris (Kroll)

If we start to obey sin even a little we are opening the door for the mastery of sin in our lives. **No one can serve two masters** ([Matthew 6:24](#)). Christians today are accustomed to picking and choosing which doctrines, which portions, of the Bible, which commands of God's Word they like, and then they only obey only those they feel are most meaning full or beneficial to them. Mature Christians do not pick and choose from God's Word; mature Christians are shaped by every page of the Bible, which is why they are mature. Paul uses the word slave because he knew that as many as 1/3 of the inhabitants in the capital city of the empire were slaves. He knew they would be able to identify with the term. Slavery to Christ is real freedom. The wages of sin is death, because the paymaster is Satan, the disciple of death.