

Romans Bible Study
Lesson 46
Romans 6:19-23

"I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as I presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now Paul switches gears and finishes his point by making a comparison between the old life and the new life. He begins with

1. "I speak in human terms:" He's letting the Christians at Rome know that he illustrated His point with common life events to make himself better understood.
2. Then Paul tells them why he speaks to them this way. "Because of the weakness of your flesh."
 - a. The term "weakness of your flesh" usually denotes the corrupt passions of people; Romans 8:7; Eph. 4:17-18
 - b. But here it refers to their intellect or understanding. Paul's saying: "Because of your imperfection of spiritual knowledge; or incapacity to discern arguments and illustrations that would be more strictly spiritual in their character."
 - c. In several places the New Testament uses parables and common life events to explain spiritual matters. Mark 4:33, John 21:15; 1 Cor. 9:22;
 - d. However, here Paul is using the common affairs of "master and slave" as an illustration, so they would see the force of his point. It was an illustration Romans were familiar with and one that would be understood better, than a more abstract and strictly spiritual example. See John 2:20; 3:4; 6:52; 11:11-14

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3. Next Paul adds: "For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness:"
 - a. The beginning of this phrase: For just as you presented your members: "indicates Paul was thinking of things these Christians had done in the past. Col. 3:5-9; 1 Peter 4:3;
 - b. Then, Paul added, "You presented your members as: "Slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness."
 1. This was a reference to their transgression of the law and their servitude to sin. Prov. 5:22; Gal. 5:19-21
 - c. Paul ends verse 19 with the contrast to the old life: "So now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness."
 1. This is a reference to how these Romans Christians (modern Christians) should live. Ezek. 11:19; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24;

In verse 20 the Apostle continues the contrast between the old life and the new life of a believer. "For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness."

1. The point he was making was that in your former state, you were not at all under the influence of righteousness. You were entirely devoted to sin; a strong expression of total depravity. Romans 3:9-12;
 - a. That settles the question and preempts the idea the unbeliever ever does anything spiritually good and proves that they had no native goodness. Romans 8:7-8; 1 Cor. 2:14; Gal. 5:17;
 - b. What Paul is implying is that they have been released from their former bondage to sin and should now become the servants of another master. Romans 8:1-2; 12:2;
 - c. And we know that's true because of the searching question Paul brings up in verse 21.
2. "What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death."

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- a. In the first part of this verse Paul asks the question: "What fruit did you have then in the things you are now ashamed."
 1. He's asking them to think about what "abiding satisfaction" or permanent advantage they had from being unrighteous. Job 15:20; Ps. 107:17; Romans 2:9; 3:16;
 2. Then the Apostle answers his own question.
 - a. "Abiding satisfaction:" Their sinful life left them only a sense of shame. Eph. 5:12; 2 Cor. 4:2; Phil. 3:19;
 - b. "Permanent advantage:" The fruit of sin is death. Romans 6:23;
- b. In using the phrase; "Now ashamed" Paul makes it clear that he's not referring to believers who have sinned against God.
 1. Instead, he's referring to the believer's past experience in practicing sin.
 2. He was saying, you have tried it; you know sins effects; you have tasted its bitterness; and you have reaped its bitter fruits.
 3. Paul point in this text was in the past you have experienced the effects of sin and also know the tendency of sin, so you shouldn't indulge in it now.

In verse 22 Paul contrasts the believer's old life once again with their new life in Christ.

"But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life."

1. Paul begins his contrast to the new life in Christ with: "But now having been set free from sin and having become slaves of God:"

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- a. He's implying that under the Christian plan of justification, you were delivered from sins dominion and bondage in the same way, before conversion, you were free from righteousness.
 1. Which means you have a new Master. And your servitude to Him is as absolute as it was to your old master sin. Romans 6:20
- b. Next, because we serve a new Master Paul adds, "You have your fruit to holiness."
 1. The fruit of your conversion is holiness. 2 Cor. 5:21;
 2. Another fruit of your conversion is the imputation of righteousness through Christ: Romans 3:22; 10:3-4; Phil.3:9;
 3. And it is also implied here, though not expressly affirmed, that in our conversion to a new Master which leads to holiness, other important benefits are included:
 - a. Another fruit of your conversion is the imputation of the "Fruit of the Spirit." Phil. 1:11; Gal. 5:22-23;
- c. Paul ends verse 22 with: "And the end, everlasting life."
 1. Here he's referring to the final state of the justified believer. This stands in contrast with the word "death" in Romans 6:21. And it also shows its meaning.
 - a. The duration for both life and death is exactly the same.
 - b. If those who obey shall be blessed with life forever, those who disobey will be cursed with death forever.
 1. This is an "Absolute contrast" that makes it very clear that the word "death" in Romans 6:21 refers to eternal punishment.

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2. Paul perfectly laid out the idea that before Christ, the Christians at Rome were pursuing a course that would lead to everlasting death.
 - a. But now they were on a path that leads to eternal life.
3. And because of this they were urged to be holy.

Paul ends chapter six with: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

1. This concluding verse is as pointed as it is brief. It contains the marrow of the Gospel. The word translated here "wages" properly denotes; "What is purchased to be eaten with bread, as fish, flesh, vegetables, etc." and it refers to the wages paid to the Roman soldier.
2. It means what a man earns or deserves; is his proper pay. Jer. 17:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15;
 - a. Applied to sin it means that eternal death is what sin deserves; it's the proper reward. Rev. 14:11;
3. But "eternal life" on the other hand is in no sense or degree the wages of our righteousness. We do nothing whatever to earn or become entitled to it, and never can. Salvation is therefore, in the most absolute sense, the gift of God. John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-9
4. Those who are saved will be brought home to glory, not because they merit it, but because of the rich and sovereign grace of God. All their salvation will be ascribed to Him and they will celebrate His mercy and grace forever. Psalm 16:11; Matt. 13:43; Romans 8:17;

In our next lesson we will open Romans chapter 7: