

Sanctification—Yielding Ourselves as Bondmen

Romans 6:13-23

We will continue our study of Romans today and we will finish Romans 6. I would like to back up and read a few verses that go into the second half of Romans 6. We will begin in verse 13:

“Neither yield your members instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but yield yourselves to God as alive from among [the] dead, and your members instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace.”

Verse 15-23: “What then? should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Far be the thought. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves bondmen for obedience, ye are bondmen to him whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God, that ye were bondmen of sin, but have obeyed from the heart the form of teaching into which ye were instructed. Now, having got your freedom from sin, ye have become bondmen to righteousness. I speak humanly on account of the weakness of your flesh. For even as ye have yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield your members in bondage to righteousness unto holiness (or sanctification, the same word). For when ye were bondmen of sin ye were free from righteousness. What fruit therefore had ye then in the things of which ye are now ashamed? for the end of them is death. But now, having got your freedom from sin, and having become bondmen to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness (or sanctification) and the end eternal life. For the wages of sin is death; but the act of favour of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Let us have a word of prayer:

Lord, we are so grateful for Your word. If we did not have Your word, we do not know where we would be. The Psalmist made it so clear Your word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. And they are not just words of direction and keeping us from falling. They are actually words of life, eternal life, and power. We say again, You alone have the words of eternal life. You alone can speak into our very lives and show us how great Your deliverance is and how wonderful our life is with You. So, we are asking You to quicken us all today. We know we all have deficiencies; as speaker, and how I am asking for boldness to speak as I ought to speak the mystery. And the hearers, how often our ears can be stopped up with many voices and many distractions, and we are asking for ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Oh Lord, today we are gathered in Your presence before Your Word. And we say like Samuel did, “Speak, Lord, Your servant heareth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Introduction

I am going to give a very short introduction. Last time, we dealt with the foundation of sanctification. This is Romans 6:1-15. Now we were talking about understanding Romans 6 in light of what was said in Romans before. Romans chapters 1-5 are dealing with justification, which is our position in Christ. We are accounted righteous. Now, do not make the mistake of thinking that you are righteous through justification. You are accounted righteous. You are given a

righteousness not your own. You are imputed righteousness. What does “imputed” mean? You have been imputed a righteousness that is not your own, but is His, and yet nevertheless, God sees you in Christ Jesus as completely righteous and completely justified and completely reconciled to Himself. That is Romans 1-5.

Romans chapters 6-8 deal with sanctification. Now many believers do not understand the process of sanctification. Sanctification, in fact, means being made holy. Now it is something different, for it is something of a work that is being done in us to transform us and conform us into the very image of the Lord Jesus. That is the work of sanctification. That is the primary work of the Holy Spirit. But the only way sanctification is possible is because of the Lord's life in us. It is not us, and I think you will see that pretty quickly.

So today we are continuing to deal with this matter of sanctification. I would like to call this message “Sanctification — Yielding Ourselves as Bondmen.”

First, we must understand that grace is the essential secret of sanctification. Without grace it is impossible for you to be sanctified. Can you imagine being made holy? It is impossible for you. It is impossible for me, but it is not impossible for God because it is through grace.

The second thing we want to look at is that Paul continues in this thought of the response of yielding. Now, there is a difference between justification and sanctification. In justification, you are only required to believe. When you believe, as Abraham believed, you are counted righteous. But when it comes to sanctification, you are required to cooperate. That is the hard part, right? That is the hard part. You are required to yield. Paul spends a large amount of time in this chapter, particularly as we go into the second half and also those verses 13 and 14, about the importance of yielding.

The third thing we would like to look at is that we are all bondmen. You may think you are free, but in the end, we are all bondmen or bondslaves.

Lastly, the fourth thing we want to look at is that we have only two paths. You know my fascination with the “twos” in the Scriptures. I have gone over that again and again: the two trees in the garden, the two gardens in creation and Gethsemane, and the two options. The only options we have as a believer: you can either, as Romans 12 says, be conformed to this world or you can be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Or Romans 8 says that you can be conformed to the very image of the Lord Jesus. There are only two options. I am fascinated with this matter of “twos” when it comes to the Word. So, we have only two paths.

Grace the Essential Secret of Sanctification

So let us begin. Grace—the essential secret of sanctification. Last time we read Romans 6:1-15, but I will read it again. These verses are very important because you see what Paul begins with in the first section (1-14) and you see what he begins with for the second section (15-23).

It says in Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Should we continue in sin that grace may abound?" That is the first section.

Then we look at a similar question in verse 15. This is the second section of Romans 6 on sanctification: "What then? should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Far be the thought."

They are almost identical questions, and there certainly is an identical response. These verses are actually erroneous thinking because the whole point of sanctification is not continuing in sin but being delivered from the power of sin and walking in newness of life. Sanctification is walking in the life of the Lord Jesus, and this is why we must understand the importance of grace. It would be impossible for us.

In the first verse of Romans 6:1, all of our issues were resolved in our union with Christ. That is why Romans 6:1-14 must deal with us being fully identified with Christ in baptism. His death was your death. Many Christians do not know this. I know when Jack and I shared with the believers in Pakistan, many had never heard this good news. But you were included 2,000 years ago in His death on the cross. That is a miracle, but God was able to do it because you were in Adam, and He put all of Adam's race into the Lord Jesus who went to that cross and died. This is a fact. This is a settled fact. You were included in that moment. So, you can say, like brother Nee said, when he saw it by revelation, "I am dead! I am a dead man! I died with Christ." When He was put in that grave, you also were put in that grave, and then something happened. Not only did He die and you died with Him, but He was buried in that tomb, and you were buried with Him. And not only that, think of the glory of God when He raised us. The old man Adam, our unregenerate self in Adam was done away with completely at that cross when you had your part with Him in death and burial. But something marvelous happened. We were raised in the newness of life. And now, because of that, we can walk in the newness of life, which is an explanation of sanctification. All of that first question and that response, "God forbid," were resolved at Calvary and following Calvary three days.

The second part, the second question, has to do with sanctification. Verse 15: "What then? should we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? Far be the thought."

This has to do with the ongoing process of sanctification. This has to do with being made holy. We must understand this. God did not want you just to be saved and be delivered from your sins — your sins being taken as far as the east is from the west. God wanted a people that were not only saved but a people that are sanctified, that are like Him. And when He sees us at the end, it is going to be that same reaction Adam had when his bride, Eve, was presented to him. The Lord is going to see us. He is going to say to us, "Bone of My bone and flesh of My flesh" because we will be made like Him. That is sanctification.

These two are eternal facts, inviolable facts. They cannot be changed. All of this process is based on fact. It is a fact you were in Christ in His death. It is a fact that you were in Christ in His burial. It is a fact you were in Christ in His resurrection. We must live in the facts. I think so often we as believers live in our feelings. I know I have a bad habit to often say, "I feel." Believers are often saying, "I feel." The first word out of their mouth when they give a testimony is, "Well, I feel." When they are sharing about the word of God, "Well, I feel the word of God is saying this." Brothers and sisters, how we need to live in the eternal facts. That is the most important thing.

Paul is saying, if you are going to live a sanctified life, you must live in the eternal fact of what is already taking place. It is yours. It is true. It cannot be changed.

You may not be a fan of the founding fathers in this world culture, but I still am to a certain degree. I love how the second president of the United States, John Adams said, "Facts are stubborn things." It is one of his most famous quotes. Every lawyer knows this quote. You often hear them to stand up in their closing arguments, and they say, "Facts are stubborn things." You have heard the facts, but do you stand in the facts? Do you believe the facts? That is the only way you will be sanctified. Adams went on to say, "And whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence." How that applies to Romans 6! Regardless of what you feel, regardless of what you think, you cannot alter the state of divine facts. They are true. They remain true. They will always be true.

What we are called to do in that first part of Romans 6 is to reckon it true. Now, I had somebody come up to me, I do not know if he was a northerner, but he said, "I do not get this thing, reckoning." He thinks it is just our Southern dialect. Anytime we have an intention to do anything, we say, "Well, I reckon I will do it." But we need to reckon. Reckon means that it has been put into your account; it is there. Go look at it. It will never be taken out of your account. It is an accounting word. You can ask our two accounting brothers, Mac and John, they will tell you it is in your account. Amen. Brothers and sisters, how important this is, and how important we need to see this!

In both verse 1 and verse 15, you notice he turns this matter to grace. Therefore, grace is the essential secret of sanctification. You cannot be sanctified without grace. The first question was, "Will we continue in sin?" The second question tells us, "Should we sin?" Now a lot of your versions say, "Continue to sin." This is the practice of being sanctified. "And are we going to continue in this state?" These are the questions. And if we continue in this state, it is contrary to all the work that God wants to do in His people. In the end He is looking for a changed people, not just a saved people, but a changed people. So, we discover in both cases that the first one says, "that grace may abound." In the second verse it says, "We are not under law but under grace." How thankful I am that Paul put those statements in Romans 6.

Many Christians think of the Christian life as a life of rules. If we keep these divine rules, if we follow these divine rules, then we can be seen as a Christian. But Paul did not see it that way. Paul very clearly saw the Christian life as a life of grace, grace upon grace. We are not under law. The reason we can be sanctified is we are not under law that only demands and can never equip, it can only command you to do something, but it can never aid you in doing anything. But grace is different. Grace gives you the life of another, the life of the Lord Jesus, and when that grace is in you, that different life, that divine life, then you can walk as a Christian and be conformed to His image. Well, I think you probably get this.

I love Romans 10:4; it is one of my favorite verses in Romans. It says, "For Christ is the end of the law to righteousness to everyone that believes." Isn't that wonderful? I always have a problem with people that like to go back and live under the law, particularly Gentiles. Gentile, let me just warn you. You were never intended to go back and live under the law. The law was not for you, but grace is for you. Have you discovered the grace of God? Have you discovered the power of

the grace of God? It can take those people who were ruined sinners before and transform them into a people of holiness. It is a miracle. But it is the power of grace, and that is the secret of sanctification. Grace makes sanctification possible.

If anyone could have been sanctified by the law, I will tell you, it is the Apostle Paul. He could have been sanctified by the law. Acts 22:3 was the apostle's own testimony in his defense. Paul said, "I am a Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to the exactness of the law of our fathers." Notice Luke's deliberate words, he wrote with method, as he says in his gospel, and he talks about exactness. And here, Luke pens, "according to the exactness of the law." Paul came short in nothing, at least outwardly, according to the law. "... educated according to the exactness of the law of our fathers being zealous for God as ye are all this day." In Philippians 3 he called himself a Pharisee of Pharisees.

Now notice how precise Paul is in the Word of God. I love the precision of the Word of God. He did not just say, "I am a Pharisee," who is an expert of the law, someone you look up to when it comes to the law. He is revered, this one who knows the law, (and is supposed to live the law, by the way). But Paul said, "I am a Pharisee of Pharisees," and that distinguished him even more. It is like that old idiom we use, "He is a man among men." Have you heard that idiom? He is a man among men. He was a Pharisee among the Pharisees; he stood out. In Philippians 3 he said, "I was blameless according to the law." Can you imagine being blameless according to the law? How unbelievable.

Yet this man could never be sanctified by the law. We know what happened on Damascus Road. This man who had an outward holiness in some respect according to the law, or the law's interpretation, had no inward holiness. If you do not believe me, please read Romans 7. You will see what Paul discovered in his ability to keep the law. It is very graphic. It is one of the most graphic chapters in the whole of the epistle of Romans. But on the road to Damascus, something happened. He discovered the secret of grace. This man of the law, this expert, this one educated at the feet of Gamaliel, who was the highest in that day of educators, discovered grace, and grace changed his life. Grace transformed him.

And remember, he was out pursuing the church. He uses the word in his own testimony that he ravaged the church. It did not matter. Men, women, children, they all went to prison, and many were killed. This is what his aim was, to destroy the church. And on that road to Damascus, the light, bright as the noonday sun, knocked him off his steed, and the Lord spoke to him directly, and said, "Saul, Saul why dost thou persecute Me?" Now I can understand Paul's confusion. He said, "I am not persecuting You; it is Your followers I have a beef with." But he learned a secret that if you touch His people you touch the Lord. That is a fact that will never change; a divine fact. Immediately he said, "What shall I do, Lord?" Here is one who met the God of grace and was transformed.

Now how do we know that? He is the apostle to the church. He wrote 13 of the 27 books in the New Testament. Now if my math is correct, that is almost 50%. He wrote half of the New Testament regarding books. And in every one of the books, he starts his greeting with the grace of God. Read it. How precious it is! This man of the law was forever changed. But then when you look, it is even more wonderful. At the end of every one of those 13 books, he ends his conclusion

with the grace of God. You ought to notice that when you are studying the Word. This master of the law became a recipient of the grace of God that could sanctify him. It became his new secret, and it should be our secret. Is this your testimony? Remember what Paul said to the Corinthian church in I Corinthians 15:10? This is one of the most wonderful verses on grace in the whole Bible; you should memorize it, "But by God's grace I am what I am; and His grace, which was towards me, has not been in vain." Isn't that marvelous? I hope that is our testimony at the end: "Lord, Your grace to us has not been in vain."

Then he said something even more remarkable, "but I have laboured more abundantly than they all." Now what does that mean? It simply means he cooperated with the grace of God. That is what we need to do. This is a whole lesson on grace in just this one verse, and then he ended, "but not I, but the grace of God which was with me." How marvelous is that statement, how precise is the word of God!

Now is that your testimony? Do you choose to be one that is still under law, and not under grace? You will regret it one day, if not already, when you find out how absolutely impossible it is for you to please God by your own efforts through rules, even if they are divine rules. I think the biggest mistake the children of Israel made was when Moses came down from that mountain with those tablets of stone engraved by the finger of God and he told them of the commandments. They said in their zeal, "All that you have commanded us, we will do." How terrible! They did not just say it once; they said it at least twice. How wrong that is! The secret, the absolute essential secret of sanctification is grace.

Now there needs to be a response. You cannot just sing that wonderful hymn, "Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that is greater than all my sin," over and over and never respond to the grace of God. Romans chapter 6 is begging you for a response. It is only as we respond that something happens, and we are transformed from what we are into what He wants us to be. That is the secret of sanctification.

The Purpose of Yielding

I shared last time about the importance and the response of yielding to in regard to the divine facts. But now I want to share with you the importance of response in regard to being wholly sanctified. That is where Paul goes. Last time, we mentioned two responses: the eternal facts, we have talked about that, and the second response is yielding. I think it is five times in these verses that yield or yielding is mentioned. It has to be important to the apostle Paul. It is absolutely important to you. Now, if you do not think yielding is important, the next time you are on the highway, you see that big triangular yellow sign. I suggest you just go right through it, ignore it, and even do it on the interstate, cross all four lanes. You will discover the importance of yielding in a big hurry, and hopefully we are not doing a memorial service. Do you understand? Yielding is absolutely important. We have to yield to the grace of God. We have to make it our own. We have to give ourselves to the grace of God. And that is what this second thing says.

Now there are two words when it comes to these responses. The first one has to do with the facts that happened when we died with Christ, we were buried with Christ, and we were raised with Christ. It is this word "knowing" in Romans 6:6. "Knowing this," is objective; it is very clear.

Brother J.N. Darby was very precise about this. He said, "This is objective knowledge." We have already talked about the facts; I do not need to talk about it anymore.

The Response of Yielding

But when he comes to verse 9 and verse 16, and you see these words "know" or "knowing," it is a whole different thing. This is the actual experience; this is conscious knowledge. Do you understand the difference? One is objective knowledge which means it is true whether you want to believe it or not. The other is conscious knowledge. Conscious knowledge might often be referred to as subjective knowledge which is knowledge that you gain from your own experience. It is in your life that you realize this. So, the second part of yielding has to do with knowing which has to do with our experiences of sanctification. In other words, you are to enter into it; you must know it. If you do not know it, you will not be sanctified. I think that is one of the clearest things I can say to you.

Romans 6:6 says, "Knowing this, ..." which is objective knowledge.

Romans 6:9 and 16 say, "knowing" and "know" which is subjective knowledge. It is conscious knowledge, the knowledge of being sanctified with Christ in your daily experience. I hope that is clear.

For this to happen, there must be a yielding. If you do not yield, it will never happen. If you wonder at the end why you were not conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus and why something was not done in you so that holiness becomes part of your living experience, there is a good chance you have missed this word yield. I hope I do not offend too many, I am going to include myself. My problem is I tend to be too passive. I think Christians tend to be too passive. Yield is not a passive word; yield is an active word. Can you imagine if a policeman comes up to you and you run from him, and he says, "Yield, or I will shoot!" I think your choice would be different. Maybe you would make a different choice, at least at that moment. How important this matter of yielding is! Are you willing to yield? Are you willing to give yourself that this eternal work may be done in you? I think this is of such importance; it is so very important.

Verse 19: "I speak humanly on account of the weakness of your flesh. For even as ye have yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield your members in bondage to righteousness unto holiness."

W.E. Vine, has written a book: "Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words." I think I have mentioned this before; it is a book you ought to have in your library. Probably none of us are Greek scholars, and to get into the intricacies of the original Biblical languages can end up being a diversion. But sometimes there is something you must know from the original language that is important, and you can gain it with the help of those who have labored in that field. They are, in my opinion, experts in that field.

Vine said that these words: holiness and sanctification are identical; they are the same words. Out of the ten places it is translated in the New Testament, five times it is translated holiness and five times it is translated sanctification. Now you know my fondness for the Darby Bible, and I am reading from it. Darby uses holiness. I wish he would have used sanctification. The

New American Standard Bible has sanctification, and that is good. Young's Literal Translation has sanctification in both areas. There are several English translations. I often look on Bible Hub and go down through the English translations to get the difference in words. And about half that are listed all have this as sanctification. That is very important. We need to see what the subject is clearly.

Sometimes we can miss it by reading in our version that says, "unto holiness." It is "unto sanctification." That phrase "unto" is mentioned twice. You see it in verse 19, that we just read. You see it in verse 22, a very important phrase. It is unto holiness or unto sanctification, both occasions. Now, this proves to us that sanctification is an ongoing process. It is not a one-time event.

Now, believing in the Lord and being saved is a one-time event. When you believe in the Lord Jesus, when you repent, you are, in fact, saved—one time. I heard a story in a little Assembly of God chapel where I was saved. There was a pastor there, Worth Johnson, who is a dear brother in the Lord. I love Worth Johnson. I would not be here today if it was not for Worth Johnson. He knew Elvis Presley very well. And he said he had been at altar calls when Elvis Presley came up and cried out to God with tears to be saved again. You can only be saved once. Once saved, always saved! You can never lose your salvation. You may think you can lose it. I know there are proponents of holiness, this is the exact same word, that says you can lose your salvation. I think you can lose your sanctification, but I do not think you can lose your salvation. Do you understand the difference? How clear the Word of God is.

This is an active process. How we need to walk in the Lord. This is what Paul meant when he said in I Corinthians 15:10, "But I labor more abundantly than they all." Here is one who cooperated with the grace of God.

Romans 6:13 tells us, "Neither yield your members instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but yield yourselves to God as alive from the dead, and your members instruments of righteousness unto God."

Verse 16: "Know ye not that to whom you yield yourselves bondmen for obedience, you are bondmen to him whom you obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness."

Verse 19: "I speak humanly on account of the weakness of your flesh, for even as ye have yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness and to lawlessness unto lawlessness," (this is a fact, this is who we were) "so now yield your members in bondage to righteousness and to holiness."

This is the only way we can be sanctified. May the Lord help us. May the Lord bring us into this important response.

I will say a stronger word. This vital response of daily yielding to the Lord. If you do not daily yield to the Lord as an ongoing thing, then He is not able to transform you.

Let me put it this way, maybe this is stronger, maybe this is clearer. You can prevent Him from doing His work. Did you know that? He is the only one that can do the work of sanctification in you through the Holy Spirit. He is the only one that can do it. But you can prevent Him from doing

that work. How do we prevent Him? We refuse to yield. We refuse to bow. We refuse to say, "Lord, take my life and let it be wholly consecrated to Thee."

I will tell you a little illustration about yielding. This is important. Through yielding, you will get stronger in the Lord. I spent my whole career, 50 years as a structural engineer. Many people say it is a horribly boring career. I liked it. Linda thinks I am crazy, she may be right. But think about it, I designed over a thousand steel structures. And the beauty of steel is its power to yield; that is the one beauty. If you do not want to be a structural engineer, do not, but you can listen to me for a moment if you want. The beauty of steel is that it is ductile. That means it bends before it breaks; it yields. There is a wonderful thing, if you look at the stress strain curve, and now I know I am losing you, the stress strain curve of steel under load and the stress that happens, it goes up to a point which is the yield point. That is what we engineers call it, the yield point. There it yields, and it loses some of its natural strength at that point. But then a miracle happens. That yield curve goes up and continues up and it gets stronger and stronger until it comes to its ultimate strength, and then it eventually fails. Do you understand that? Yielding produces strength in the Lord. That is why we do it. I think this is at least clear to me if not to you.

We Are All Bondmen

The next thing that Paul talks about and reveals is that all mankind are bondmen. In other words, let me be direct: all are slaves. When Jack and I have ministered to those in Pakistan, and studying the book of Romans together, they know something about true slavery. We look at the conditions, and we talk about going there in October or late September, and those conditions of slavery that they live under are almost unspeakable. You ought to see the houses they live in in those brickyards. I do not think you can call them a house. It has four walls and a tin roof in that blazing hot sun and a dirt floor. The whole family lives in there, and they spend all day as slaves without any prospect of freedom. It is just like it was in Exodus, slaves making bricks by hand in the boiling sun. So boiling is it, that when they looked at my blond hair, blue eyed, German complexion, and looked at Jack, who is relatively light like me and said, "We do not want you to come in the middle of the year; you will roast." But these people know what bondage is.

Do you know that all of us were bound? The Jews that believed said to the Lord Jesus, "We have never been bound to any man." The Lord corrected them. They said, "We are sons of Abraham" in such pride, "We are sons of Abraham, we have never been bound to any man." And the Lord was abundantly clear to them about their bondage. They were in bondage to sin. But He said a great secret, "He who the Son sets free is free indeed."

There is only one moment in your life as a Christian or a person in this world that you are free. It is when Christ sets you free, you are completely free. *You are completely free.* As a matter of fact, I am really going to press the edge and probably one of the brothers will correct me, but you can totally live for yourself, even when you are a free man, a free woman. Many Christians do it; they live for themselves. It is all about themselves. But in this matter of sanctification, Paul understood the importance of being a bond-slave of the Lord.

Now a bond-slave is a love slave. A bond-slave is not like those folks in Pakistan who have this debt that they can never repay, even though there is a promise that every week or whenever they

get their wages, part of it is going to pay their debt. I heard the story, if they go to the task master and say, "How is my debt doing?" He says, "Oh, hey, for sure, blah, blah, blah, blah." He cannot explain it. Really, probably, they will never get out of bondage. But we who are saved in the Lord are absolutely free.

But the context of Romans 6 is different. It is not about you being free. It is about you being a bondman of the Lord. Are you willing, knowing that you are free as a Christian, to become a bondman of the Lord? Do you remember the apostle Paul first used the word bondman or bondsman in the introduction of this book in Romans 1:1. He described himself as "Paul, bondman of Jesus Christ." He describes the importance of bondmen and bondwomen 34 times in his 13 epistles. And here in Romans 6 is one of the clearest: "You were once bondmen to sin and lawlessness, the things of which you are now ashamed." But the call to you and to me, in sanctification, is to be a bondman of Jesus Christ. Are you willing? Are you willing to be a bondman of Jesus Christ?

I think this is an amazing thing that we need to understand. If you look at Romans chapters 6, 7, and 8, that deal with sanctification, you will notice a very important conclusion in all three of those chapters. You will notice, all three end with Jesus Christ our Lord. Is He Lord of our life? Is He our true Master? I do not believe we will ever be fully sanctified, wholly sanctified (I Thessalonians 5:23), unless Jesus is Lord of our life. I hear people say, "Jesus is my friend." He is indeed your friend. I have heard people say, "Jesus is my buddy." I cringe at those words. But so few believers say, "Jesus is my Lord." This is what it means. We are to willingly be bondmen for the Lord Jesus. You will never regret that choice. Again and again, he says, "You were a bondman to this, but now you are a bondman of God, a bondman of the Lord Jesus." Are you willing to be a bondman?

It reminds me of that story in Deuteronomy 15 about the servant, the bondsman. You probably know that story. Exodus 21 is a repeat of the story.

In Exodus 21:5-6, "But if the bondman shall say distinctly, I love my master, my wife and my children. I will not go free."

Isn't that amazing? Who would make such a choice? To be granted freedom after being a Jewish slave for seven years, who would not take it and run to the hills as a free man or free woman? But this one did something different, extraordinarily different.

"But if the bondman shall say distinctly, I love my master, my wife and my children. I will not go free. Then the master shall bring him before the judges and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl."

I think this is maybe one of the first examples of pierced ears. "Bore his ear through with an awl" and listen to what it says, "and he shall be his bondman forever." This is what the Lord is looking for. This is what is necessary for sanctification. Oh, that we would be such a people. This is the essential response for sanctification. Anyone who makes this choice will never regret it.

We Have Only Two Paths

The last thing we will look at is the two paths. In the end, every human being only has two choices and two paths.

Romans 6:13: "Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin but yield yourselves to God as alive from among the dead and your members instruments of righteousness to God."

Verse 19: "I speak humanly on account of the weakness of your flesh. For even as ye have yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield your members in bondage to righteousness unto holiness."

This is a choice every one of us today needs to consider. What will be your choice? God set you free. You could be like this slave and say, "I love my Master; I will not go free." There is one person in this room, and I am not going to point him out, but almost every time he prays, he says, "You are such a loving Master." Do we know that? This is the secret of sanctification. This is the path we need to consider.

I think of a wonderful hymn, Francis Havergal's hymn, "I Love, I Love my Master." I do not know how many of you know that, but it says in the first verse, "I love, I love my Master, I will not go free." How that should be us. How much more than this Jewish master, how much more lovely, how much more gracious is our Lord! How much more compassionate! Oh, dear saints, hear Paul's appeal. It is very great.

Then we see a word in here of obedience in verse 16. Now that is a word we do not like. You know, kids do not like it. Listen, we have had teenagers, and I understand what teenagers are. I am not picking on any teenagers. Most of you are out of the room. But sometimes obedience is the issue. Now I am not going to leave this as teenagers alone. I think more often with adults because we think we are adults, and we think we are in charge, but obedience is the issue. Do we follow that teaching we have heard from the heart and obey? There is a unique phrase which only occurs in the book of Romans, and you should notice it. It is in Romans 1:5 and in Romans 16:26, and it is the "obedience of faith." It is a very important phrase, but it only occurs in Romans. Do we know the obedience of faith? If we do, it will change our life. May the Lord bring us into it.

Who will choose to obey sin and unrighteousness? That is one path. Or will we choose to obey God in Christ? That is the second path. There are only two choices in life. May the Lord help us so that we do not think we have endless choices. You may have endless choices in the minor things of life, but in the major thing of life, which is serving God for His people, and being sanctified wholly. You have two choices. One path leads to death, and it makes it very clear that that path leads to death. Now if you are saved, you will not live an eternal death. You will not go through the Great White Throne. You are exempt from that, but you will suffer great loss. And when you go before the judgment seat of Christ, and He asks you what you did with those graces that He made available to you, unspeakable graces, you will suffer loss. And I would suggest that is in the kingdom, not in eternity.

There are two choices, and two paths. Which path will you choose? William Newell said in his commentary on Romans, speaking of that sin unto death and this last verse, "For the wages of sin is death; but the act of favour of God, eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." He said, "For sin, which they had served, was a terrible paymaster. Sin's wages was death." He went on to say, "what hellish wages!" He went on to quote from Job 18, a phrase, speaking of death, "the king of terrors." That is one path. Will we choose that path? Remember, this verse 6:23 is in the context of sanctification, not salvation. What path will you choose? We are at a fork in a road, and there is a path to eternal life, an eternal blessing, and there is a path to death or loss. As a believer, when you face this matter of sanctification which way will you choose? This to me is sanctification.

Conclusion

Thank God we are not under law, but we are under grace. It would not be possible without it. Thank God; how we need to respond by yielding. Are you willing to yield? Thank God, we need to give ourselves to this benevolent Master as bond-slaves forever. It is only then that you will discover the riches of Christ. There are only two choices, only two paths. Make the wise choice that leads to eternal life and choose the right path. This is sanctification. Think of that word in Deuteronomy 30:19: "Life and death have I set before you, blessing and cursing: choose then life, that thou mayest live." Remember that? That is a sobering, sobering thought.

I will tell you a quick testimony and end. I used to have a problem, I do not mind telling you this story. It may be the first time, the only time I have told it. I had a problem with this thought of absolute surrender. You know that wonderful hymn, #603 in Christ in Song, "I Surrender All"? I could not sing it. I could not sing it. The words would get caught in my throat as a choking man. I often, at many altar calls in those early days, heard this call to absolute surrender and my head would hang. I stopped singing. And then one day, I read brother Andrew Murray's book, "Absolute Surrender," and it set me free. I had confessed to the Lord, "I cannot do this, I could never surrender absolutely to You. That word is not in my vocabulary. I do not even want to."

I have told you this story before, but I remember one time going to brother Kaung and saying, "Brother Kaung, what do you think?" And he said, "Ask the Lord and say, 'I am willing to be willing.'" I opened that little book which had stayed on my bookshelf for years, and I read about absolute surrender. I discovered a grace to surrender, the secret of sanctification. I always thought brother Murray was a little bit of a legalist. I am sorry, brother Murray, I will apologize to you when I see you face-to-face. It was an eye-opening experience for me when he said, "It is impossible for man, but it is possible with God." I was free. I was free! Now, if you want to sing that song, I will sing that song with you. How the Lord is looking for ones that are willing to make the choice of absolute surrender. So, this is Romans 6.

Father, we commit these thoughts to You and ask You by Your mercy, and by Your grace to speak into our spirit where no one can speak but the Holy Spirit. We ask You to make real what we need to hear as Christians. We want to be those that are wholly sanctified, and we know, left to ourselves, we will run. Left to ourselves, we will refuse. But it is possible through the grace of God by Your life in us. And I want to tell You again and ask You for these dear brothers and sisters that this would not just be a few in this room, not just a few in the Christian life, but it would be many who can say, "I surrender all." This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.