

June 25, 2017
 Sermon for the Third Sunday after Pentecost
 St Peter Lutheran Church
 Bowie, TX
 Larry Knobloch, Pastor
 Romans 6:12-23

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Romans 6:12–23 (ESV)

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.

Slaves to Righteousness

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.

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

Many of you might have had a chance to change professions or employers simply because you have realized that there was a better salary, better benefits or maybe your current employer was not honest or maybe you just didn't get along with them.

In most of these cases, we all try to work towards having a good salary or to be under a good master. Once these conditions are fulfilled, you try to serve the new master so well that maybe the former master will take note and miss what he lost. Good master and good salary are stimuli for good services and commitment. You may have thought the old life, the old job, or the old boss was gone for good. But something unforeseen may once again reunite you. Old relationships do not hold, and you are not duty bound to serve the former boss. The relationship is not wholly forgotten, but it is broken.

Such a shift of masters is the main characteristic of the Christian life, because Jesus has freed you from sin, your old master, in order to serve Him with a totally new life!

Still, the Christian remains simultaneously both saint and sinner after Baptism. Sinful because the flesh wages war against the spiritual and saint due to the imputed righteousness that Christ gives to all those are joined with Him through the waters of baptism.

Prior to baptism, sinners served their former master, obeying him and yielding the members of their bodies to be instruments to his evil enterprise. It's a little hard to accept that Lark, just baptized this morning, was previously serving the prince of this world, but she was.

As Paul says in our text, "*You . . . were once slaves of sin. . . . When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness*" (vv 17, 20).

You were inclined to all sorts of evil without the slightest feeling of shame. From edge to edge, we were corrupted in thoughts, sayings, and deeds.

When we are living with two opposing ideas or attitudes, at the same time, we deprive God of the true honor that should be His.

If we are trying to serve two masters we are taking away from God's love for us. It's almost like we are thumbing our nose at God's love.

We gave our mouths over to the magic incantations and to the practice of superstition. We were not ashamed to summon ancestors to be gods and helpers. So we used the precious gift speech and voice to praise and pray to those false gods to whom it does not belong. We wasted our ears listening to the lies of seers and diviners instead of taking heed to listen to God's holy revelation.

We don't even live our lives in accordance with His Word. Our hearts did not honor and respect those worthy of our regard and consideration but did more to despise them. With tongues of vipers, we used venomous words; we killed, although maybe not physically, emotionally or even spiritually.

Either way, we fell short of the true love and respect for the sanctity of marriage, we didn't care about the respecting another's property and we stole anything from pens from work to someone's wallet; intentionally or unintentionally.

Never did we consider the reputation of our neighbors to be a gift from God that needs to be protected so we participated in the idle gossip or maybe we just listened, not bothering to correct those speaking, even though we might know differently.

We could never figure out that coveting was a real sign of contempt and displeasure for the blessings God has given us, because the whole problem behind coveting is that we always want more.

And we did all of these things, whether we were able to rationalize them or not; and they yielded but a sour fruit: *"But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed?"* Paul asks. *"The end of those things,"* he says, *"is death"* (v 21). Death!

If the wickedness we had performed and the fate we had earned were made into a movie, would any of us have the courage to watch?

Thanks to the Law, we now know this. The Law was our master then. But now we are not anymore under the Law; we are under the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his life on the cross and carried us through the waters of Baptism to the newness of life. *"But now . . . you have been set free from sin,"* Paul says. *"You are not under law but under grace"* (vv 22, 14).

Not under law...but *GRACE!*

We died with Christ in the waters of Baptism, and we were raised with Him.

Christ allowed Himself to be baptized, for it was fitting to fulfill all righteousness. He exchanged His righteousness for yours and became sin for you. As though this were not enough, He continued this journey to the cross, where He pleaded forgiveness for you the sinner and paid the price.

Uttering *Te-tel-es-tai* ("It is finished"), He did everything to restore you to a new and better relationship with God. His death and resurrection has given you new standing before God.

You have not only life but also peace and hope. From your lack of true fear of God to that of true love for your neighbors, Christ has worked actively to accomplish your salvation.

He worshiped the only true God perfectly, even while in temptation and called upon only His name for prayer and praise. He showed mercies and true love for neighbors as He visited the sick ones and the needy.

He fed thousands and comforted the bereaved while raising the dead. He paid for all of this with His most innocent and precious blood, not with gold or silver, so that you are not held responsible for your many failures.

And now you belong to Him. Jesus is your new master, and He is also in you. You were united to Him in Holy Baptism, just like Lark was earlier this morning!

Christ even left us with His pastors to remind us continuously, "Your sins are forgiven." Dismissed are your sins as you daily die in contrition and repentance. You receive all these tremendous gifts with a word of faith as you simply say, "Amen. It is for me."

Since God has provided so many ways for your sins to be forgiven, should you persist in sinning so that there may be all the more grace? Such is an absurd idea! As you died with Christ, this old life was dead and buried. You came out of the baptismal waters to begin a new life. As you were freed, you now live in the light of that new freedom. You have a new master to serve, a master who has called you to be holy as the Lord your God, the triune God, is holy.

This new life consists of this, that God fills the totality of your life, making it a consecrated life. Through faith, He moves your hands to do His will, your feet to walk His ways.

In this new life, your voice also and always will be singing for God—the only true king, and your lips are filled with the message from Him—that sings of your redemption in His Son. Under Him, even your intellect is driven to love Him with all your heart and mind. So it is that the will once bound captive in death now is viewed as a gift from the author of life.

We all once served our mortal bodies and the desires driven by Satan and self-centeredness. Now you have been brought to the newness of life as you died with Christ in your Baptism. Therefore, Paul says, *“present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness”* (v 13).

Let Christ shine through you, bringing forth fruits worthy of Him. Avail your bodies to serve God, bringing the Good News of salvation to others. God is present in your neighbor. Christ has made you a member of His body—the Church—to do works not of the flesh but of the Spirit, driven by the Gospel.

He shows you love, mercy, and compassion. As the apostles once said, “*We cannot but speak of [the things of Christ] we have seen and heard*” (Acts 4:20).

By faith, we, the children of God, know that we are not the cause or the source of good deeds, but it is Christ who is living in us who has carried out God’s holy will. So God’s child will also realize that the wages paid by the former and new master do not bear any point of comparison. One is a deserved sentence of death, but the other is the unmerited free gift of everlasting life.

May the Lord who called you to newness of life in Holy Baptism lead you by the power of the Holy Spirit to serve your new master, bringing others the Good News of salvation as he places the unbelieving neighbor in your path.
Amen.

The Peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

S.D.G.—Soli Deo Gloria

Sermon Outline

Jesus Has Freed You from Sin, Your Old Master

Romans 6:12-23

- I. Prior to Baptism, you served your old master, sin.
- II. Now you are free, living under grace.
- III. Since God has freed you, you live the new life.