

(Romans) Obedience From the Heart

by Brian Brodersen

The key to victory over sin is obedience from the heart, and we must serve the Lord Jesus Christ to achieve deliverance from bondage.

Duration: 34:25

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 1:16, Romans 6:6, Romans 6:13-14, Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Topics: "Spiritual Freedom", "Glorifying God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of surrendering ourselves to God and allowing Him to use us for His purposes. He highlights the fact that sin should not have dominion over us because we are under grace, not under the law. The speaker also emphasizes the need to glorify God in both our body and spirit, as they belong to Him. The sermon concludes with a reminder that sin leads to death, but the gospel has the power to set us free and transform us into new people.

Transcript

We are picking up tonight in the 15th verse of the sixth chapter of Romans. And remember in our study last week we're talking about really the issue of victory over sin. And last week we looked at the keys to victory.

We saw that there are three things basically that that contribute to victory over sin in our lives. First of all, it is knowledge, knowing certain things, knowing specifically that our old man was crucified with Christ. And secondly, remember we reckon that to be a reality.

We consider that to be a fact and then we act upon that. And you know just by way of illustration, somebody mentioned it last week after the study to me, but you know there is a time and a place and sometimes it's more often than other times, but we're really in sort of a dialogue situation and we're having to talk to ourselves. We're having to, you know, look the old man sort of in the eye and say, no, you have no control over my life.

No, I'm not going to go there. I'm not going to think that. I'm not going to feel that.

I'm not going to drift in that direction. And that is something that we do. It's a reality.

And you know I find that many times in a lot of areas I have to go back and I have to walk myself through the scriptures in certain areas and I have to talk to myself about it and I have to talk to the Lord and I have

to say, okay, Lord, you said this right here and therefore this has got to be a reality. And so then I come back to myself, okay, so this is a reality. This is the way it is.

And that's part of our way to victory. We have to know these things and then we have to stand up and say, this is a fact. The old man is crucified with Christ and I'm not going to be dominated by that.

I'm not going to be controlled by that in any way. And then the third point you remember was that we present our members, our intellect, our speech, our hearing, our heart, our hands, our feet. We present our bodies then to be used by God, our members as instruments of righteousness.

And as we apply those three things, we experience victory. And remember another thing I pointed out is the more often we submit to the spirit, we develop that habit of doing so. And so as we consistently yield to the spirit, submit to the spirit, then we develop this pattern in our lives of doing that.

So picking up now in verse 15, Paul had said that sin shall not have dominion over you for you are not under the law, but under grace. And remember we talked about how grace is not just a theological concept. Grace is the very power of God that is instilled in us and flows through us to live that life of victory.

But then Paul anticipates somebody misinterpreting him. So he says, what then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? Sometimes people have misinterpreted what Paul has actually taught. And they've run with that idea that, well, since we're not under the law, then we can basically live any way we want.

But that of course isn't the teaching of the apostle. That's not the scriptural teaching in any way. No, we do not sin because we're not under the law.

It's because we're under grace that we're empowered not to sin. But now Paul takes it from a different angle in responding. He says, do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one slave whom you obey, whether of sin to death or of obedience to righteousness.

So here's a real warning. Paul says you don't want to mess around with sin, basically, because sin enslaves. It brings you into bondage.

And whoever you present yourself to obey, you become the servant or the slave of that particular thing. Peter, in his second epistle, in chapter 2, verse 19, he said, for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. So basically, he's talking about who's mastering you.

What is your master? If Christ is our master, which is, of course, to be the case, then we are slaves of Christ. And as a slave of Christ, I cannot really submit myself to somebody else's authority. I am under his authority totally.

But the idea is that whenever we do surrender ourselves in obedience, we come under the dominion of that person or that thing that we are submitting to. But look what he says in verse 17. He says, but God be thanked that though you were the slaves of sin.

Now this is our previous condition. We were the slaves of sin. We were bound to sin.

And I'm sure everyone in here could give somewhat of a testimony of how they were bound to sin in their past life. Not everybody had the same bondages or the same manifestation of it. But all of us were bound

to sin.

We all know or knew firsthand that experience of having something in our lives that was wrong, something in our lives that we realized was wrong, something that we said, you know, I am never going to do this again. I'm going to conquer this. This is not going to control me.

And yet we found ourselves under its control. We found ourselves even with all of our swearing and all of our promises and all of our, you know, commitment to not doing it. We found ourselves doing it.

What is that? That's nothing less than bondage. So we were the slaves of sin, but you obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness.

Now notice what Paul says here. And this is the key to the whole thing. Deliverance from bondage is conditioned on one thing, and that is obedience from the heart.

And this is the reality. For any man who is in bondage to sin tonight, the reality is this. It's because you're not obeying God from your heart.

That's the reality. Now, you can come up with all kinds of different theories about, you know, why this is going on and how come you're doing that. But when it all boils down, this is what the scripture says.

It's a matter of the heart. I've talked to so many people who, you know, have been in bondage and have been crying out in anguish. And I keep stumbling.

I keep going back to this. And, oh, I want to be. I hate this.

I hate this. And, you know, there are times I just look at them and say, you know what? You don't hate it. You don't hate it.

That's why you keep going back to it. You see, you've got to really hate it. Hate it to the point where you say, no, I'm not going to do this.

Deep within our hearts, that's where that whole issue is going to be dealt with. And that's what Paul points to here that brought deliverance. It was obedience from the heart that brought us the deliverance.

You know, when we come to Jesus Christ, and this is true a lot of times, when a person comes to Christ, there's such a dynamic work of the Spirit. And there's so much thanksgiving for what God has done. And there's such an appreciation.

And there's such a love for the Lord that these things that you were doing, they're just, they're disgusting to you. You're ashamed of them. You, oh, I never want anything to do with that.

Oh, Jesus, how could I have done that to you? And that put you on the cross. And you experience this great victory. But yet what happens? How is it that people who have had that very experience, some years down the road, they find themselves back in that situation again? You know, I suggest that it happens when we drift away from our first love.

You see, because the thing initially that was motivating us, that was giving us that hatred for sin and that determination not to be involved in it, it was our love for Christ because of what He did for us. But when

our love for Him begins to grow cold, and we don't appreciate it as much anymore, and we start to take it for granted, and we're not thinking so much about that, oh, it's so easy for sin to creep back in. And for us to start making compromises, and then before too long we find that, wait a second, I'm doing the things that I was once set free from.

So we've got to get back to that obedience from the heart. That's where deliverance comes from. Having been set free from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness.

I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh, for just as you 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.

Just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, he says, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness. Righteousness. Think of the time that you put into serving sin and self.

Think of the energy that you put into serving sin and self. Think of the dedication that you had to serving sin and self. Paul is saying, take that same dedication, take that same energy, put that same time into serving Christ.

You know, I've said this before, and I don't know if I've said it here, but if you're struggling with sin, if you're in and out of sin, it's probably partially to do with the fact that you've got too much time on your hands. Take that time and dedicate that time to the Lord. You know, I believe that a lot of times it's because of an idleness that sin enters into our lives.

You know, it's interesting in Sodom and Gomorrah, we know that the sin that sort of marks Sodom and Gomorrah was the homosexuality. But did you know, and of course, we learned that from Genesis and from passages in the New Testament, but in Ezekiel, Ezekiel tells us something else about the sin of Sodom. And he doesn't even mention that particular sin.

This is what he said the sin of Sodom was. He said the sin of Sodom was idleness and fullness of bread. They had too much time and too much comfort, and that led them into a vulnerability, into temptation, and then ultimately into these gross types of sin.

But think about our country. Think about the world that we live in today, and especially our part of the world and the experience we have. You know, their sin is proliferating, but what's also happening? We've got fullness of bread.

We've got so much time on our hands. People are idle. They're bored.

They, you know, they don't know what to do. And that can even be the case with Christians. A friend of mine called me the other day from Spain, and he said, he said, man, I am so, I'm so wiped out, man.

I'm so, boy, it's tough. I'm preaching five times a week. And I said, well, I said Wesley preached five times a day until he was 92 years old.

So, you know, you still got a little more in you, I'm sure. And, you know, he thanked me for that encouragement. But, you know, seriously, I have known, I have known people, believers, brothers, true,

you know, men of God, guys who love God, but they get caught up in types of sin because of idleness.

Too much time on their hands. Get yourself involved in doing something for the Lord. Get yourself involved in some kind of service to God.

Take that time and energy that you're spending in that sinful behavior. Get out of that and dedicate yourself to seeking God and serving God. Now, I know for myself, it's been a long time since I was living that life of sin, but I remember it quite vividly.

I was, I wasn't holding back anything in pursuing the fulfillment of my own fleshly desires. I would stay up all night. And, you know, I was young back then, but I remember, I remember times when I would literally party all night.

I wouldn't even think of going to bed. I wasn't going to go to bed. I was going to party.

And then, you know, sun rises and you got to be to work at seven o'clock and you just go to work and you do it. And you might do that two or three times a week because it was, you know, that dedication. It was that dedication to fulfilling my sinful desires.

And I was committed to it. I was devoted to it. Or man, if I wanted to go on a surf trip, I was going to be up at the crack of dawn.

I'd get up at four o'clock in the morning on the road at four thirty and in the water at six and no problem. But man, somebody talks about an all night prayer meeting. Man, I get so tired at nine.

Hey, why don't we meet early and we'll seek the Lord? Oh, well, how about nine o'clock? You know, it's a little early for me, you know, maybe six or seven. And isn't it true that sometimes that's where we're at? Paul's saying basically to take all of the same energy and effort and dedication and devotion that you once had to your sinful lifestyle and put all of that toward the things of the spirit. And if we do that, if we did that, we're going to find that there is going to be great fruit from it.

Now, he says, he asked this question, what fruit did you have or what fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed for the end of those things is death. You know, as you look back on all that time and energy that was spent, what fruit do you have from that? It's all a waste. There's nothing, there's nothing left of it.

We are here in this world to bear fruit for God. And that fruit is going to proceed us to heaven. Jesus said, store up treasures in heaven.

And that's what we're to be doing. We're to be living our lives, storing up heavenly riches so that when we leave this world and when we arrive in heaven, there's something there waiting for us. There's the fruit of our labor.

Ideally, we would leave fruit behind, but we would have fruit that goes before us as well. But when I'm living for myself, when I'm serving myself, when in the end it's all about me and my will and my desires, I've got nothing left of that. There's no fruit from that.

It's worthless before God. You guys have heard that little saying, there's only one life, it'll soon be passed and only what's done for Christ will last. That's absolutely true.

How much of our lives do we spend doing things that have no eternal value whatsoever? Paul says that now having been set free from sin and having become the slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness in the end everlasting life. So we have basically as Christians, what's happened is we have traded masters. Our previous master was none other than Satan himself.

You guys remember the Dylan song from the 70s, you've got to serve somebody. It may be the devil, it may be the Lord, but you're going to have to serve somebody. That's the reality.

Everybody serves somebody. And if you're not serving the Lord Jesus Christ, whether you know it or not, you're actually serving the devil. Because everything that's not under the authority of Jesus is ultimately under the authority of the devil.

It's part of his program, it's part of his agenda. People say, hey, what are you talking about? I don't even believe in the devil. That doesn't change the facts.

You might not believe in him, but you're actually serving him. And that's what it comes down to. If you are a believer tonight, then you have been transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

You've gone from the devil being your master to Christ being your master. And you know, there's one thing about a slave that we need to remember. The slave takes orders, the slave doesn't give orders.

A slave doesn't tell the master what he will do or will not do. He doesn't even, a lot of times, get to make a suggestion about what ought to be done. I heard somebody giving that kind of illustration a while back, somebody who had a military background, and I think he was, you know, something in the navy, and he said one thing you learned really early on is that you don't go up and make any suggestions to the admiral.

That's just not part of the routine in the military. You're there to simply do what they tell you to do, and that's the extent of it. And there is that element, of course, in our relationship with the Lord.

It's not about what I want to do or what I think, it's about what God has called me to do, what His plan is. And I am to take my instructions from Him, and I am to be obedient to those instructions. Just as a slave, a slave did not have the option of quitting, a slave did not have the option of refusing to do the work, none of those options existed.

A slave had one option, basically, and that was to do the master's wishes. Now, thank God we have a master who loves us, has compassion, and has a good plan for us. But nevertheless, it doesn't take away from the reality that there is that service element that I am responsible to in regard to my relationship with Him.

And so He has set us free from sin so that we can be the slaves of righteousness. That's why Jesus set us free. He set us free from sin so we could become the slaves of righteousness.

So it's a total contradiction, and it's a total reversal if we who have been set apart to be the slaves of righteousness, if we end up back in the other camp and slaves of sin again, we're just reversing everything that the Lord came to do. Do we understand that? We're to implement. And I don't want to be doing that.

I don't want to be working against God. I want to be right in the flow of what God is doing. But again, it comes back down to recognition of ownership.

We recognize that we are not our own. Paul the Apostle, you remember, he said that in writing to the Corinthians. He said, You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which belong to Him. You see, this is not mine to mess around with. This belongs to God.

And since it belongs to God, it's to be used for God in His service by Him and for His glory. When I start using this instrument that belongs to God for my own selfish purposes, to gratify my flesh or whatever else, I am then setting myself up for some serious discipline by God, some serious chastisement. Because of course, He's not going to allow that kind of thing to go on unchecked in our lives.

The chapter closes with a verse that we're all familiar with, I think. But it's a reminder of where sin leads ultimately. For the wages of sin is death.

Sin is death. James tells us the same thing. When desire is conceived, it brings forth sin.

And when sin is mature, it brings forth death. Sin can only produce death. It cannot produce anything else.

Never be fooled into thinking that sin can somehow bring about something good. You know, I've had many times where a person has sinned and got into trouble, and then they think the way out of trouble is to sin more. It's not the way out.

You're only compounding the problem. Because sin can only produce one thing. It doesn't even have the possibility of bringing forth anything else.

Sin can only bring forth death. It brings forth death in us spiritually. It brings the death of everything around us that we touch.

And ultimately and finally, it brings forth spiritual death. And that's the death that Paul is really referring to here. The wages of sin is death.

And you know, like I said before, and I want to keep saying it, and I think it needs to be repeated over and over again. We have got to get back to just taking God's Word at face value. This is what it says.

It says the wages of sin is death. And whenever you start trying to, let me clarify that, or let me qualify that, or well, you know, let me explain that. That sounds a little harsh.

Then what we're doing is we're taking the edge off of the Word of God. You know, there is an element in the Scripture where God wants us to see very clearly the seriousness of sin and its consequences. Now, we thank God for His grace.

We bask in His grace. We're so appreciative of His grace. And we teach the grace of God.

We preach the grace of God. But we can never lose sight of God's hatred of sin and His absolute determination to deal with it when He finds it. If you ever have any question mark in your mind as to whether or not God has, you know, changed His attitude towards sin, just reflect on the cross.

The cross will remind you that God's attitude for all time towards sin is one of absolute abhorrence and hatred and intolerance. God is completely intolerant when it comes to sin. He has no tolerance for sin whatsoever.

That's why He did not spare even His own Son. So we have to really be careful not to fool ourselves into thinking that somehow God, you know, maybe He's changed a little bit. Maybe He doesn't feel exactly the same way as He used to about these things.

And the temptation comes along when we see all around us people doing these kinds of things and saying, well, you know, it's a different day. It's a different age. It's a different time.

And times have changed and standards have changed. You hear people saying that kind of stuff today. But God's word hasn't changed, never will change.

And sin always leads to the same thing, and that's death. The wages of sin is death. So what is the overall message in all of this? Stay away from sin.

Just, it's as simple as that. Just stay away from it. You know, if I'm walking along somewhere and I see, you know, an electrical wire or, you know, maybe a fence that's, you know, it says, stay away.

You know, 220 volts or, you know, it's got a big lightning bolt thing on there. You know, I'm not going to go up and kind of see how close I can get to it, or I'm not going to do anything like that. I'm going to go, I'm going to go the other direction.

I'm going to stay as far away from that as I possibly can. I don't want to, I don't want to mess with that at all. And we need to see sin for what it is.

It's just like that. It's 220 volts and it'll zap you in an instant. And we've just got to see it for what it is.

And I want to, I want to stay as far away from it as possible. I don't want to dabble with it. I don't want to get near to it because it's destructive.

And again, the wonderful news in all of this is that that's the very reason Christ came. The very reason He came is to set me free from sin, to bring me under His dominion and authority. And so if I'm not there, then I'm working against His purpose.

And I certainly don't want to do that. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. The gift of God.

God gives us freely His life, His power, and along with that, there's that victory over sin. It comes with it. That's what it is.

When the life of God is in you, then the life of God will proceed from you. And the life of God is a righteous life. See that, that's really what, somebody summed up Christianity in this way.

They said, Christianity is the life of God in the soul of man. That's what Christianity is. If God lives in you, then you can understand that He would certainly want to live out from you as well.

If God lives in us, then all of the potential for victory is right here within our own being. It's all here. If I'm in bondage to sin and God is living in me, that's a complete contradiction.

I have to then ask the question, is God really living in me? I mean, it is possible. It is possible that people who are Christians fall into sin and get wrapped up into bondage again. But the point is this, of course, it doesn't have to be that way.

It shouldn't be that way because all of the power is there. It's available. It's residing in us.

And it comes down to just this one thing, recognition of who the master is and total submission to Him. I just submit to Him. I obey Him.

And when I do that from the heart, I'm set free. And that's what Jesus Christ does. He sets people free.

And that's what we need to remember. And that's what we need to get back to, just that simple, that simple gospel message. Paul said, you remember back in the 16th verse of the first chapter, he said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God to salvation, to everyone who believes.

Man, the gospel comes and it rocks our world. It just takes us and turns us inside out and makes us new people. That's the gospel.

We want to stay away from religion as we've talked about before. We want to avoid, you know, a churchy kind of a thing. Man, we want to be living in the presence of God and in that experience of His power working in our lives.

And obeying from the heart is really the key to the whole thing. Just unconditional obedience. Lord, you're the master.

I'm the servant. What would you have me to do, Lord? As Paul said at his point of conversion. Lord, we thank you that you have supplied us with all the power that is necessary to live a victorious life, a life freed from sin, a life in the spirit.

And so, Lord, help us tonight. If we've lost sight of who our master is, Lord, we turn back to you and we submit to your lordship over our lives. Lord, if we've been serving another master, forgive us.

And Lord, help us to obey from the heart that form of doctrine to which we were delivered. And Lord, may you strengthen us through your word. And Lord, may we as a group of men be men who are walking in victory.

Men who are living in the power of the Holy Spirit. Men who are able to lead in your church and among your people. Not straggling behind, not constantly stumbling into sinful things, but by your grace and through your power, rising above all of this.

Thank you, Lord, that the old man was crucified. Thank you that that is a fact. And thank you, Lord, that we can present our members to you as instruments of righteousness.

And so take our members tonight, Lord. Our minds, our speech, our thoughts, our hearing, our strength, our hands, our feet, our bodies, and make them weapons of righteousness in your hand in these days for your glory. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen.

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