

Whose Slave Are You?

by Rick Leibee

This sermon explores the concept of being a slave to God versus being a slave to sin, emphasizing the importance of yielding oneself to God for true sanctification and holiness.

Duration: 1:24:11

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 6:13-23

Topics: "Sanctification", "Obedience To God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of total sanctification and the need to align our beliefs and actions with the word of God. He highlights the significance of yielding ourselves as instruments of righteousness unto God and walking in faith, even when we stumble. The preacher uses the analogy of teaching a toddler to walk to illustrate the process of sanctification and the need for persistence and reliance on God. He also discusses the concept of being a slave to sin versus being a servant of God, emphasizing the need to choose obedience and live for Him every day.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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Grace and blessing be unto you. I guess we do seem like a little band in lowly here with quite a number being sick. I guess that's one of the after parts of men's leadership sometimes or Bible school.

Sometimes those things come in, but that's all right. We trust God for those things and we accept those things as part of our walk with God. Yet we can pray for those that aren't here and trust that they will soon be raised back up.

I have discovered though sometimes it seems like that when I am sick or on my back, there are lessons that can only be learned in that position. I don't know what physically has to do with the spiritual, but it does have something to do with it. When I'm physically in that place, there are lessons that I seemingly, maybe to my shame, I don't know, can't learn in any other position.

So, I trust God will continue to work in our hearts with all of that. This morning, I was a little torn on what to share. I was thinking about Weston's situation and his last Sunday with us and wasn't sure about that.

Should I share something along those lines? But then I asked him to share and he felt like he just wanted to share a little opening, which he did. So, I think I'll leave it with that and be thankful that he was here and able to share those things. It was actually seven weeks ago today was the last time I preached on a Sunday morning, even though I've preached ten times since then at a Bible school and then here at Men's Leadership.

I have not preached on a Sunday morning, so though I feel like I have preached a fair amount, it's different on a Sunday morning. I'm glad to be here on a Sunday morning and recognizing those things and being able to share the Word of God here together and pray that the Spirit of God will speak to me and to you and to us together what He has for us. I think we will try to finish here this morning, chapter six.

We read the first twelve verses and preached on those seven weeks ago on the last Sunday of the year, December the 30th, and so we'll pick up this morning and we'll go through verses 13 through 23. Now, these verses, we're going to stand in a moment and read them together, but I just want to say a few words before we read these and then pray together. And that is, as I told you seven weeks ago, but it may be a bit dim in our memory, is that chapter six is a definite turning point in the book of Romans.

The first five chapters primarily speak about justification by faith. There's also a lot in there about sin and the wrath of God and other subjects, but the primary theme or the primary message of the first five chapters of the book of Romans is justification by faith. And therefore, we could say, in a way, those chapters are for unbelievers.

They are also for believers in that we need to know the Gospel to be able to preach and tell the Gospel. But they are for the unbeliever, the one who does not know God, who is living in his sin, whose sins have not been cleansed by the blood of Jesus. To know and to understand those things is very important.

And yet here in chapter six, there is a turning now to you and I, the believer, the saint who sits in the church of God. And it's very interesting that as God begins to turn His focus upon you and I, that strangely enough, the very first thing He talks about is sin in the life of the believer. We almost want to think, okay, we're done talking about sin because that's for the unbeliever, the sinner.

Why does He start this whole thing of sanctification, this walk of Christianity in the life of the believer, talking about sin? And yet, we can all confess, if we're honest, that once we're saved, sin still does enter into our lives. Sin is still a factor. We still make choices to do the wrong thing.

And though we have a new nature, that new nature in and of itself does not have the power to totally eradicate all sin in our life. Because there is still the power of choice and our own will and all those things. Now, God has the power to give us victory over sin, but just because you're a Christian, you cannot say, I will never sin again.

The Bible even says, if you say you have sin, you are a liar. The truth is not in you. And so, Paul chooses to begin here in chapter 6, talking to the believer about sin and sanctification.

And so, we went over many of those things and we learned that God desires a holy life, that many of the same elements that have brought you to Christ by faith are some of the same elements that you need to continue your walk with Christ, and that is faith and the grace of God. I need the grace of God today. I've been a Christian 24 years, and I need the grace of God, I think, more than I did the day I got saved.

In fact, I say I needed a lot more. I need more faith today to walk with God than I did the first hour that I first believed. Because now I know more and understand more, and I see the kingdom of God bigger, and it is much, much too much for me to figure it all out, and I need faith.

And so, the same things that brought you in will be the very things that will keep you along the way. And those are some of the things that we looked at here seven weeks ago. And so, now we'll get here in verses 13-23, the end of the chapter, even a bit more practical.

We learned in the first 12 verses that sanctification is positional. We talked about baptism and being identified with Christ. In that, once I am in Christ, and He is in me, and I am in Him, positionally, I am holy.

I am made righteous because of the righteousness of Christ. And that's a great blessing, isn't it? That because I'm in Christ, God looks at Christ in me and declares me a saint. Even though sometimes I don't act very saintly, right? And yet, we do believe, not just our theology, but our understanding of the Word of God and God's promises, that if you are in Christ, you are in a position of being righteous or sanctified.

And yet, do you always act or live a righteous life? Do you always act and live in a sanctified way? And so, verses 1-12, we began to understand our position in Christ. And we must understand that. We must believe that.

That is an issue of faith, that we understand that Christ took our place on the cross, and in Him, we have the position of not only being saved from our sins, but we have the position of being sanctified and righteous. The Bible says in Corinthians, He who knew no sin became sin that we might become what? Become the righteousness of God. And that is positional sanctification.

And though it may seem a little bit of an abstract thought, it is one of those abstract thoughts that is very real and very important, and that we need to believe by faith and have in our hearts. So now we'll swing to a bit more practical aspect of sanctification, and that is the choices that you and I make every day and every week and every month. And what is the result of those choices in the life of the believer? And it is in those choices that we go from positional sanctification to practical and real sanctification and walking in a sanctified way.

So why don't we read these verses here? Why don't you stand with me? And we'll read verses 13-23 together, and then we'll go back and walk through them here this morning. While we're standing there and your Bibles are open, why don't we bow our heads and we'll just have a little word of prayer before we read the Word of God. Our Heavenly Father, our gracious and loving Father, who has loved us first and best with an eternal love, we thank You, Father, for that position in Christ.

We thank You for Jesus Christ, whose blood has been shed. We thank You that we are saved, and yet, Father, we ask You by Your Word and Spirit to teach us how to walk in a way that is pleasing to You. We don't want just a position, Father.

We want a life. We want to walk. We want reality.

We want to not just be called the sons of God. We want to act like and live like the sons of God. Help us this day, Father.

Open our eyes once again. Let us see Jesus. Let us see the truth of Your Word in our lives and in our hearts.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen. Alright, let's read starting in verse 13 and then through the end of the chapter together. Ready? Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid! Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, His servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness. Be thanked that ye were the servants of sins, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now, being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Alright, you may be seated. Just so you know where we're headed, look in verse 22 with me.

I'm going to skip ahead and then go back to the beginning. But just so you don't lose sight of this thing of practical walking out of sanctification, verse 22 says, but now being made free from sin and become servants. Now wherever you read the word servants in this passage, it's the Greek word *doulos* which is slave.

Now in the King James Version when they put the word servant, they knew that a servant was a slave because it was an indentured or bonded servant which was the same as the slave in England. But we don't use the word servant to mean that today. We often use the word servant as somebody who either serves in a church or they're a servant at this or a servant at that.

But a servant here is the Greek word *doulos*. And in the Greek there's actually only one translation. It's slave.

It doesn't say servant. It says slave. And so read slave here.

But now being made free from sin and become slaves to God, ye have your fruit unto, where are we headed? Holiness and the end everlasting life. So if you see the connection here, it's saying that where we're going with all this practical sanctification is not to just say we're sanctified, but it is to live a holy life. There is something that God wants you to do.

And He knows, strange as it sounds to our Western ears, the only way to do it is you have to become a slave. You know, a lot of people say they want holiness, and I'd say to you, then are you ready to become a slave? Because the only way to become a slave, to be holy, is to become a slave. And that doesn't fit our Western mindset.

But just bear with me as you go through this passage, and you'll see this is Paul's way he lays out how to live a holy life, is to become a slave. And that's the title of the message today is, Whose Slave Are You? Whose Slave Are You? Because if we're honest, we are all slaves of something. And Paul lays it out here.

You were a slave to sin. And if you're here today, and you understand what you once were, can you not say, can you not be honest and admit that you were a slave to that sin? Some of you here have sins you remember in your life. Whether it was lust, whatever it was, lying, gossiping, anger, smoking, drinking, I don't know.

But were you not a slave to that sin? Did it not control your life? Did you not think about it? Did it not enter into the way you thought? Maybe the way you dressed. What you listened to. Who your friends were.

It had its tentacles into every aspect of your life. And you, because you were the slave to that thing, your life reflected the character of who was your master. Did it not? Our life reflects the character of who is our master.

And so Paul is going to lay this whole thing out. And so that's why the title of the message today is, Whose Slave Are You? Okay, now let's go back to verse 13. Now you know the whole message.

We could stop there, I guess. But let's go through the verses anyway. And we'll see a few things here together.

I trust by the grace of God. Now, in verse 13, it says, Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. And then it gives you the cross side of it.

It gives you the compare and contrast. But rather, yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive. Meaning the members that are alive from the dead.

And your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Now the word yield here is the same word that we'll find later in Romans chapter 12, verse 1 where it says, That he beseeches ye that ye present your bodies as a living sacrifice. So the word yield here is the word to present or to offer.

It's kind of like if you were arrested and thrown into jail, but somebody got you out on a bond. You ever heard of a bail bondsman? Yeah, bail bondsman. But then the judge tells you, I'll release you on bail.

But you are to present yourself here tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock. And the inference of that is, and whatever he says to you tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock when you present yourself, it's going to happen. You can't get out of it.

You may be free to go home and sleep in your bed tonight, but it's not just your presence that he wants there. You are to present yourself, and you are going to be under the authority of the court, even though you may be sleeping. I remember when I was in the third grade in school, I had a third grade teacher.

Her name was Mrs. Howell, and she was one of those teachers that was a bit of a taskmaster, I guess you could say. But it was for our good now that I look back. And back when I was in school, we called the roll.

Every morning she called the roll. And we weren't allowed to say here. We had to say present.

And then about every two or three weeks, she would give us this same speech. And Rick Leiby, present. John Smith, whoever was here.

And then about every two or three weeks, she would say, now, remember, being present isn't enough. Being present just means you are sitting here. You are to present yourself in the right way before we're going to begin the lessons.

And she'd do a desk check. And everything had to be tidy and orderly. She was one of those from another generation that believed that a tidy desk meant a tidy mind and an organized way you kept things was in order.

And she says, being present isn't enough, Rick. The way you present yourself to me here is going to tell me what you're going to learn today. Well, it's a little bit like this.

God isn't just saying He wants you to say, yeah, I'm a Christian. I'm here. He wants you to present yourself in that you are offering.

You are not just here, but you're ready for whatever He has to do or wants in your life. You are going to give to Him. And you're going to do.

And you're going to obey. So it's a word that means something like that. Now, the idea of a surrendered life or a yielded life, at first, doesn't sound very exciting.

It might sound a bit colorless, maybe a bit bland. And yet, when we yield, when we surrender, we actually then finally discover the victorious Christian life. Amen? It is not when we fight and struggle, but when we surrender and present or offer or give ourselves totally to God, we then begin to find victory.

And so it's not unexciting. It's actually very exciting. It's just we have to understand what's going on and turn our thinking around to make the right connection here so that we can present ourselves and our members for righteousness.

And by an act of the will, we yield or present ourselves to God with our new nature. And though we will never get rid of our old nature entirely in this life, we are actually told here, but you can yield yourselves. He wouldn't say it if you couldn't do it.

He says, but yield yourselves or present or offer yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness. And so the hope is here that if you'll surrender and give over your life totally to God, that you can be alive in Christ. And it's more than being born again, may I say.

This passage is not to the unbeliever. It is to you and I that are sitting here today. Because what is the real problem? The real problem is that we still have sin.

The real problem is there are things in our life that shouldn't be there. And Paul is talking very straightly and plainly to these Roman Christians and he's speaking the same way to you and I today. Spiritual victory won't happen until our yielding, our offering, becomes very specific.

You know, I can sort of say this out loud and Paul can say it, and it can sound pretty good and we can all nod our head. But the problem is, it really won't impact your life until it becomes specific into the specific members and elements of your life and my life. Spiritual victory won't happen until our yielding becomes specific.

And so the question to you and I today is have you yielded those parts, those members of your life, your body to the Lord? Your mind. You know, your mind is a member of your body. What thoughts fly around that head of yours? What thoughts have flown in and out of your imagination this week? The Bible says in Colossians, to set your mind on things above, not on things below, for you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

But if in your mind, if you're playing things in the theater of your mind, fantasies, worldly fashion, maybe for the girls, lust for the men or whatever it may be, that big red shiny new truck, those things which can just play in our mind. You know, technology today is a big thing among people and a lot of people just think and dream about getting the latest this, the latest that, the latest cell phone, the latest computer and all those kind of things. And those things play in our minds.

And if you have not surrendered and yielded and offered that to God, it can't be used for righteousness. And so it has to be specific. You can't just say, well, yeah, I'm going to yield my life to God.

I'm sorry, if that's all you say and do, you'll never find the victorious Christian life. You'll never walk a sanctified holy life because you'll just kind of float around in this general, unspecific thing. What about your heart? Your heart and your mind here are similar in the way that I think we think of it, but what do you value? Our heart is the center of our being and the center of our being focuses on those things that we value.

What does your heart value and what does your heart go toward when it's not a Sunday morning? What is your heart chasing? Because we know that out of the heart flow what? The issues of life. And so, Jeremiah said the heart is deceitful above all things and who can know it? And yet, somehow, as a member of our body and of our life here, we have to turn and give those things that we place value on to Christ. What about our eyes? Have we looked at things we shouldn't be looking at? Have you yielded your eyes to the Lord? Job had to make a covenant with his eyes so that he would not look wrongfully upon a maiden.

It talks about in the Bible and many other areas what our eyes look towards and it can look towards fashion, it can look towards worldly dress, it can look to a lot of things, but have we yielded our eyes? Have we specifically said, I want to not just stop looking at those things, but I want to look and see the things of the Kingdom of God. Our ears are the same way. How many testimonies have we heard over the years at Bible School, Brother Moses, about young people who admit they've been listening to wrong music? And sometimes they're good young people, they're born again, and yet they've snuck and let their ears be full of country music or contemporary or whatever it is, Christian rock or whatever, and it starts just by a little bit of listening.

Their ears are pretty much surrendered to God, but when nobody's around, they kind of turn that thing on a little bit and then it grows and grows and their ears are not yielded or offered up to God as instruments of righteousness and pretty soon they become a slave and they'll admit it. I couldn't stop listening. We've heard testimonies like that.

I couldn't stop listening. I was doing it all the time. I was collecting more of that and I was hiding it in my closet.

I bought CDs. And you know, whose slave are you? And again, Paul is writing this to Christians. And so it has to become very specific.

Our mouth. What comes out of your mouth most of the time? What comes out of your mouth during the week? Proverbs says, he who guards his lips guards his life. We could go on with different members, our feet, different things like that, but I'll say it this way, maybe in a positive way or another way to say the same thing.

When your lips become His, when your eyes become His, when your ears become His, when your heart becomes His, when your mind becomes His, when your hands become His, when your feet become His, then guess what happens? You will be His. Then you will be His. Because then you'll look back over your life and know, yes, I am His.

I have surrendered. I have presented. I am walking in practical holiness, practical sanctification.

It isn't just an idea in my mind or that I read in the Bible. I have presented and offered those things to Jesus Christ this week. It ultimately comes down to those choices that we make.

This passage 13-23 is a passage of choices for the Christian. Daily choices that the Christian must make. Verse 14 is a very wonderful verse in many ways.

Listen to this verse. For sin shall not have... See, just as I finish verse 13, some of you are getting a little depressed and you're thinking, Brother Rick, I'm not sure if I can do this. I keep making the wrong choices.

Paul knows that. God knows that. That's why verse 14 is here.

Listen. For sin shall not have dominion over you. Praise God.

Isn't that wonderful? For sin shall not have dominion over you. For ye are not under the law, but under grace. You know, breathe a little spiritual air, Christian.

Rise up. Let your heart beat again. Amen? For sin shall not have dominion over you.

There is hope. There is a way. And yes, God knows you're afraid.

God knows you're ashamed. God knows you are not perfect. God knows you will make mistakes.

That isn't the point. The point is, He loves you. You're under grace.

You know, we get the idea sometimes that once we're a Christian, that we put ourselves right back under the law. You know? Maybe not the mosaic law, but we put ourselves right back under the law. And Christians struggle because they know that they have a sin.

They know that they've not yielded in some area of their life, and it brings depression or discouragement or condemnation. And listen, I've preached enough on the law here that you know this. The law always brings condemnation, right? Because we can never keep the law.

Right? We cannot keep the law. No man can keep the law. Is that true? It's true, isn't it? No man can keep the law.

No man has ever kept it except Jesus Christ. No man has ever walked perfectly except Jesus Christ. You cannot do it.

And just because you've become a Christian, you cannot keep the law. And yet, people become Christians, and they think, okay, now I'm a Christian. I've got to live right.

And amen, we do. But we go at it. We go right back to the same way we were before in religion and drag the laws into that.

And some Christian churches say, well, okay, you've got to keep the Sabbath here if we'll know that you're really walking with God. Some churches say you've got to speak in tongues. Some churches say you've got to drive a horse and buggy.

Some churches say you've got to wear a head covering. And all those things may, in their own places, may or may not be good. And yet, that is not how you have a relationship with God.

Those are just fruits. Those things that we do that are maybe holiness, whether it's our dress or the music we listen to, but those are just the fruits or the evidences of the path we're walking. They are not the way that we access the grace or the faith in God even after we become a Christian.

It seems like we get it turned around so many times. And then you meet Christians who are actually depressed. Christians who are feeling condemned and you're going, what is going on? Why are they so low? And you're realizing their thinking got turned around.

And they're not understanding. And so that's why there's verses like this that says, Christian, for sin shall not have dominion over you. Not because you have it figured out.

Not because you now have enough strength. You don't need any more grace. You don't need any more faith.

You're going to do okay now. That's not what the Bible is saying. For ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Meaning, get back under grace. What do you want? How do you want to have a relationship with God? Do you want your relationship to God after you're a Christian to be measured on how you keep the law? Or do you want it to be measured on how much grace you're under? Well, we know the answer. That's what we need to walk in.

So even though we're making choices, even though we're getting practical here, the choices have to be backed by and under the power of grace, or you'll still get frustrated. You'll still have this feeling of condemnation. And Paul is trying to make that clear here.

You know, it's a relationship. God knows that it's going to be a struggle. We have believers who think that once they sin, God doesn't care about them anymore.

And they get depressed and they listen to the devil and feel like, what's the use? Paul is saying that is not true. You are not under the law. God knows your frame.

You need to be under grace. You don't need to be discouraged. You need to be convicted and walk in those things.

And the Bible says that a righteous man, though he falleth seven times, what does he do? He rises up again. And he walks in faith because he's looking to God. And it's kind of like when you're teaching your two-year-old toddler to walk, you know, you could explain, you could give the laws, the physical, whatever it would be, the geometry of walking.

If we could analyze it, it's a bunch of levers and muscles. We could explain that to our two-year-old. We could make a chart.

We could put pictures on the wall. This is how you walk. We could decide we're going to explain it 20 times.

And after 20 times, they'd better get it because the law of this house, thou shalt walk, right? Because how many people here don't want their toddler to ever learn to walk? There's nobody like that, right? We know we want them to walk, right? But you know what the funny thing is? I wonder how many times I've ever counted. Todd, you have a lot of little ones. How many times does your toddler fall before they walk without falling? You can't count.

It's whatever, hundreds, thousands, I don't know. Now, after the 20th time, did you start spanking them and pointing to the pictures and say, no, the law of this house is thou shalt walk. Because you were doing it for their good, right? The law is good.

They do need to learn to walk, right? So you're doing it because it's a good thing. But what do you do instead? Okay, honey, let's try again. And you pick them back up.

It's not that they don't want them to learn to walk. It's not that they're not going to learn to walk. It's the way they're going to learn to walk is grace, love, encouragement, and helping them along and even helping them up when they don't feel like it.

And maybe they don't want to try again, but you say, yeah, honey, we're going to try again. And all those kind of things. And that's what Paul is saying here.

You know, God understands those things. And that's why you need to be under grace and not under the law. Okay, verse 15.

What then? Shall we sin? And again, remember, you've got to keep reminding yourself or you're going to forget. The we here is who? You and me. It's Christians, right? You know, we can read this so quickly and we think, well, that's those other guys.

It's not those other guys. It's you. And it's me.

You know, if you do not read this passage and make it very personal, it'll seem like a bunch of theological something or other. Well, it's not. It's practical sanctification for you and for me, okay? What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid.

And it's similar to how we started this whole chapter in many ways. This whole sixth chapter deals with what happens when a believer sins or is tempted to sin. And again, we do not like to think that believers sin, but unfortunately, they do.

So the real question is this. Can you go on living as you once did before you were a Christian in your sin? And the obvious answer is God forbid. No, we know we can't do that.

And yet sometimes Christians find themselves with a sin that they are repeating more than once. This passage isn't for that whoops, what I call the whoops accidental sin that just happens, you know, every now and then we go, oh, why did I do that? This is something. This is that thing that's, you know, up in the attic in that dark little corner and it just stays there.

And nobody knows about it, you think. And maybe you don't go up there every day, but you've been up there more than once, more than twice, and it's there. And it's still there after a month, and it's still there after two months.

You know, it's there. And we know what it's like. We've all felt the shame of some of those things in our lives since we've become Christians, haven't we? And Paul, God knowing that, is trying to lay this out to say what shall you do? Shall you just go on living in those things because you're under grace? Shall you just leave it up in the attic? God forbid.

God forbid. Now, he doesn't want to condemn you as we'll look at in chapter 8, but he doesn't want you to deal with it. God is trying to give you a way to get up just like the toddler does and try it again.

And walk. A righteous man falls seven times, but he rises again. Come on, let's go.

Yield this to Christ. Present it to Christ. Be specific.

He's dealing with a very important subject here that if we're honest, we have all faced sin in our life as a believer. And we've all faced a sin or sins that have hung on for more than a day or a week or a month. Sins that have come back several, several, several times in our life until we almost want to go, what is the matter with me? Why is this still here? And yet, it's still there.

You know, it's there. You know what sin that is in your life. I know what that is in my life.

We have experienced it. We've had it in our life. And this is what he's talking about here.

For sin, he says here. Well, let's go on. Now, oh, I don't think I'll go over that.

Well, I will say this. The Christian life is not going to be lived because you have figured out once you're a Christian, a set of rules. I've said that before.

But, what is the Christian life? The Christian life, and what he's trying to get us to see through this whole passage, and even though this is a negative passage, I want to say this again. Then what is the Christian life? The Christian life is a loving relationship. And part of that relationship is to be obedient unto Christ.

You know, Brother James chose this song. I'm sure he didn't know what I was preaching this morning, but he chose the song, Trust and Obey, for there's no other way. And the reason for that is it's part of your relationship with God.

The song didn't say follow a set of rules and then you'll find the way. It said trust and obey. In other words, faith.

It's still down to faith. But the bridge to the relationship with God is faith. And what shows whether or not the bridge is real is if you obey and you put the boards and the planks on the bridge.

You know, you can't just leave it there half done. It means communication and communion with Christ. Jesus Himself said, if ye love Me, keep My commandments.

Identification with Christ, again, is positional. But listen, chapter 6 is going to take us from positional to practical sanctification. Obedience to Christ, listen, write this down and help me say it.

Get it out right here. Obedience to Christ is the experience of practical sanctification. Does that make sense? It's as simple as that.

It's a profound thought, but it's that simple. Obedience, and that's what Paul is saying throughout this whole thing. He's really, if I could sum up the whole thing, saying listen, listen, listen.

Obedience to Christ is the experience of practical sanctification. Now, he explains how you do it all. You yield your members.

You do this. You make these choices. But what he's saying is simply this.

God wants you to be holy. What does it say in the book of Hebrews? Without holiness, no man shall see God. Amen? Without holiness, no man shall see God.

And as we said in verse 22, the result, the fruit of all this that God is looking for is that you will have holiness. And in order to get there, you have to have an obedient heart. But to have an obedient heart, you have to have a heart of faith and be under grace.

You have to walk these things out. And that's practical sanctification. It is just as simple as that.

Practical sanctification, listen carefully to this whole thought, is not how you walk. It's with whom you are walking. Because with whom you are walking will determine not only where you're going, but the way you get there.

And God is very excited about where we're going. Heaven. Amen? But you know what else He's excited about? The way that you get there.

And the way that you get there is a walk of righteousness and holiness. But you can't get there just because you're born again. Remember, it's not how you walk, it's with whom you're walking.

If you don't have the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ walking with you, you will not walk the way of a submitted, yielded life with your members under righteousness. Just because you're a Christian, just because you have a new nature, your new nature in and of itself doesn't give you the power to walk in the way. It hopefully only opens your eyes to realize all the more, I don't have the power.

I cannot live the Christian life by myself. I cannot open the door to that little attic. I don't even know where the key is.

I'm so scared to go in there. I'm so scared of all those things. I'm afraid of them that I don't know what to do with those things.

We need to turn all that over to Jesus Christ is what He's saying here. It's who you're walking with. Not how you're walking.

But again, the who you're walking with will affect how you walk and the way that you walk to get there. Okay? Otherwise, we end up with religion. And there's a lot of very, very well-meaning churches that started out right and because they thought of a lot of good things and they were all good things for the church to do end up back in religion worse than they were before when they left the Catholic Church.

We've seen that in many religious groups. And again, the reason Paul is taking so much time and effort on this subject is simple. Sin does occur in the life of the believer.

Sin is tempting. And you must choose as a Christian what you will do. Choices we make determine so much in our lives even after we are Christians.

You know, every day in our life it's amazing sometimes we live in America the choices we're confronted with. We're confronted with something as simple as when we're driving to work or to church there are speed limits posted. And you can make a choice.

You can observe the speed limit or you can choose to break the speed limit. You know? And there are consequences to those choices. There are consequences to the choices we are making.

Now, as we get into verses 16 through 19 and we think of the title Whose Slave Are You? He's going to bring this thing out in a very graphic and vivid way that we want to see. So let's look at verse 16 here for just a minute. Before I read verse 16 maybe I'll read 16 through 19, I'm not sure.

But Paul is going to give us three consequences to our choices that are wrong consequences or that are consequences that we don't want. In 16 through 19 he says that if you yield your members to unrighteousness, to sin, then it will make you a slave of those sins again. And it's a sad thing to supposedly be a free son of God and still be a slave to some sins.

Do you know what happens sometimes? And then that cloud comes over your spiritual life, that darkness. You know, your prayers start bouncing off the ceiling instead of going up to heaven. You read the Word of God and it's foggy and it's not clear.

All of those things happen. Number two, in verses 20 and 21, it says that if you yield yourself to sin and become a slave to sin, it will make you ashamed all over again. Those things that you used to be ashamed of that you did, you'll find that you're doing them again.

Some of those things can creep back into the life of a believer and bring shame again. And then ultimately in verses 22 and 23, that if you stay a slave to those things, it says that the wages of sin is what? Death. And so those choices that you make as a... This is to believers, remember.

We often quote Romans 6.23 and we use it as a gospel thing. Well, I'm sorry, I guess we can do that, but that's not at all the context. It's to you and me.

This passage is to you and to me. The wages, Christian, of sin is death. And so, that choice begins with slavery.

Then it leads to shame. And the ultimate end is death. And that's how it's laid out here in these verses.

And so we'll walk through some of that. Now in verse 16, Paul says... He begins with these three words. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves... Now, he wouldn't say, know ye not, if he didn't suspect there's some of us that are acting like we don't know it.

Do you follow me? He's saying, know ye not that when you yield yourselves to this sin, what it's going to do? The answer is, you're acting like you don't know it, so I'm going to have to treat you as if you don't know it and tell you the truth of the matter. Because some of you are acting in a way like you don't know it. I know you know better, but you're not acting like you know better.

And so he says it in these words. These are strong words. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves... Again, the word yield is to offer yourself... The idea is you don't think of sin this way, do you? But Paul's trying to get you to see it.

That when you sin, you're actually offering yourself to sin as a slave. You are saying, be my master. Now, we would never think that in our head, but that is what in fact happens, doesn't it? That is the transaction that is occurring between us and the sin.

Though we don't like to say it out loud, though it sounds strange when Brother Rick says it from the pulpit, the reality of it is that's what the Word of God is saying is happening. And so it's true. This is the transaction that's happening.

Know ye not. And Paul is saying here that the One who is our Master is the One whom we obey. If you obey sin, then sin is your Master.

It's another way to say it. If you're going back and doing that thing again and again, guess who's the Master? And if He's the Master, that's sin, then you're obeying the Master, then you're the slave. Please be careful.

You know, Christian, don't say Jesus Christ is my Lord and Master if it's a lie. Be careful, Christian. You know, He does need to be your Lord and Master, but if something else is your Master, if something else is causing you to be the slave, be careful what you say.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed is the good news. Free to do what? Free to live as you want? Free to indulge in those sins? This passage makes a resounding no. God forbid.

A resounding never. Don't do that. Because that's not really freedom to indulge in that sin.

It's slavery. It's slavery. And the result of that is slavery, shame, and death.

Who you obey shows who your Master is. When I was 23 years old, we were living in England. I think we were 23 years old.

We were living in England for about not quite a year. And I was working for an insurance brokerage firm in downtown London at Lloyd's of London called Hall Rockner. And I remember one of my first strange experiences for me there was one evening, I was working late.

They often work late over there. And I was coming out of a business meeting and there was a large group of men coming out of the meeting. And sitting out front of Lloyd's of London, there were about 30 limousines.

And in a group over here was like 20 or 30 chauffeurs, all dressed in their uniforms and their chauffeur's caps and their name badges on there. And I was told after the meeting, I was the only one there from my firm, just call for the chauffeur and he'll drive you home, which was 20 miles away. And I'd never done anything like that before.

And I thought, I don't know how to do this. What's the deal? And they gave me the guy's name. His name was Charles.

Charles the chauffeur. So I went outside and I just called out, Charles, I'm ready to go home. All 30 of the chauffeurs looked at me, but only one of them came out of the group.

And he walked toward me, climbed his head. Yes, sir, I'm Charles, your chauffeur. I'll bring the car around.

You stand here. Got in the car and he said, where do you want to go? And I said, well, I want to go home. He said, well, I'll take you anywhere you want to go.

It doesn't matter. We'll stay out all night. I'm here to serve you and drive you.

I've been told to take you wherever you want to go. I said, well, I just want to go home. And so I told him where I lived and it was like, it was only 20 miles, but took an hour and a half because of London and all the traffics.

And as I think back, I realized that although there were 30 chauffeurs, only one obeyed my voice. And he came and he brought only one car. There were 30 cars, but he only got one car.

He got the car that belonged to the firm that I was with. And the point is very simple. You know, who you obey shows who your master is.

I called for him and he came and he did what I asked him to do. And that showed he was Charles that worked for the firm that I worked for and he was the chauffeur. And so in our life, who we obey, what we do, shows who is our master.

Just like that night showed. None of the other men came. I wasn't their master.

They were all chauffeurs. They all had cars. They all could have driven me home, but none of them even moved a muscle once I called his name.

Then they ignored me, turned around as if I wasn't, you know, somebody worthy of their attention because the answer was I wasn't worthy of their attention. I wasn't their master. So it didn't matter.

And so that's just the way it is. And so the question for you today is Christ really your master? Maybe you don't lie. Maybe you don't commit adultery.

But are you living the Christian life as if Christ is your master? It is determined by how you obey. Verse 17 says, but God be thanked that ye were the servants, the slaves of sin, but... And he keeps going back and forth between the negative and the positive here. And here's the positive.

But ye have obeyed from the... And notice where true obedience comes from. From the heart. You know, it's not a list upon the wall.

It's not the Ten Commandments on a stone tablet. It's when your stony hardness of your heart has been turned to a heart of flesh and God has written His law, His will, His way, His love, His grace on your heart that you can obey from the heart. Obedience for the Christian is from the heart.

That form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. It's not because somebody wrote it down or somebody said this is a good idea. It has to be a transaction of the heart.

And the good news is here, you can obey Christ. Do you see that? Because these people did. They're men and women.

This was written to men and women. Flesh and blood people like you and me. And He says of their testimony, I know that you have obeyed from the heart.

And so the testimony here is you can obey. And my testimony is, even though I'm not perfect, I know there are things in my life that I obey from the heart. And when I do, my testimony is, what a blessing.

What a grace. Not because I have to, but because I get to. Because I want to.

The motivation, the drive, the value of my heart that is placed upon my walk with Christ has motivated me that I want to obey Him. And what a difference that makes. What a difference that makes.

Now, as we look at here in verses 18, I'll read 18 and 19 together. I want to talk about slavery a little bit more that we can try to understand a few points here. It says, verse 18, being then made free from sin, ye became the servants or the slaves of righteousness.

Now, he's going to explain to you in verse 19 why he's using this example of slavery. I speak after the manner of men. Meaning, I'm trying to give you an object lesson.

I'm trying to speak to you in a way that you can understand so that you can get this important point. Because of the infirmity of your flesh, for as ye have yielded your members, slaves, to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield or present your members, slaves, to righteousness unto, and there's that word again, holiness. Now, Paul knows that in the day he lived in, he was a citizen of Rome.

There were about 120, historians say about 120 million people in the Roman Empire. Over half. Over half of them.

60, 70 million were slaves. So slavery for them was common everyday stuff. And everybody understood what a slave did, how a slave acted, and how a slave responded to his master in terms of obeying.

They even understood something else. When a slave, a certain slave belonged to a certain master, he could actually sell that slave and that same person could then belong to another master. Right? Let's say a week or a month or six months goes by and they're walking down the street, this slave with this new master, and he sees his old master.

Now, if the old master says to his slave, Slave, come shine my boots and cook me some lunch. What will that slave do with his new master? Will he go shine the boots and cook the lunch? No. He'll look to his new master and say, Do I have to do that? What should I do? And his new master will say, No, you're my slave now.

We're going to the market today. And then he can, even though this man is a... Maybe he's a senator. Maybe he's a centurion.

He can walk right by him. He doesn't have to obey him because he's not his master. You know? This is his master.

He serves this man. He doesn't serve him anymore. How strange it would seem, and this is what Paul's trying to picture in the subject lesson, if in the middle of the night, this slave would wake up in the middle of the night and sneak and run across town on the alleys, go over to this master's house and say, Can I be a slave for you tonight when nobody's looking? You know, maybe shine a few boots.

I just love shining your boots and digging in your garden when nobody's looking. And then sneak back over here and during the day be this guy's slave and then five nights later run back over. I mean, nobody would believe that could ever happen.

And I'm not saying it would. And that's why Paul's trying to get you to see it actually makes no sense. How can you be the slave, say you're the slave, say this is your master, and be running over here in the middle of the night? We know that can't happen.

And yet, as Christians, it seems like it kind of sort of happens, doesn't it? You know, we go up to that room in the attic sometimes or wherever it is. You know the analogy I'm trying to make. That secret thing, that secret place.

And we serve that master. And then we run back to Christ and act as if nothing happened. Or if we do, we sort of give a little I'm sorry and all this sort of stuff and I'll never do it again.

And then four days later it happens again or next month or in six months or whatever it is. And it makes no sense for the physical slave. What Paul is saying, it makes no sense for the spiritual slave because whose slave are you anyway? Remember, that's our title this morning.

Whose slave are you? You're going to serve something. You know, I'm sorry if you don't like that terminology, but that's the terminology of the Bible here. This word serving is *doulos* in the Greek.

Who are you going to serve? The strange thing about this type of slavery is you get to choose. Who are you going to offer yourself to? Sin or to Jesus? You know? What are you going to do? And slavery is a little bit hard for us to understand today. We don't understand the definitions and all those things like we should, but Paul is trying to use this in a way that we can understand in a way that his people then can understand so that they can get a picture of the choice that they need to make.

And he's trying to do that for you and I. Maybe another illustration would be the prodigal son. You know, the prodigal son was a son, was he not? He had every right to the things that his father possessed. He had the right last name.

He had the right DNA. He had the right genetics. He probably had the right schooling, the right teaching.

He was a son of his father. But the pull of the world was strong. And he gave in to the pull of the world and he thought he was in charge.

I'm going to go have me a good time. And at first, it sort of kind of looked like he was having a good time. He had riotous living.

I guess he went to the bars of that day, bought the women of that day. Maybe he gambled. I don't know what all he did is encompassed in that word riotous, but it sounds pretty wild.

And he had money. And he did things. And he had lots of friends.

But pretty soon, the Bible says, the money was gone. And suddenly he ended up in debt from all of his spending. And then he ends up in the pig pen being a slave to pigs.

I mean, he could only eat what was left over when the pigs were done, hoping that they didn't eat it all. Now, that's a picture of slavery to me. And so the very pull that he had, the very thing that he wanted, his freedom to taste the world, he ended up tasting it all right.

The husks of the pig trough. And that's what the world's offering you. And that's the slavery of the world.

And then it wasn't until, as the Bible says, he came to himself. And he actually had to make a choice. And he said, I'd be better off if I were what? He says servant, but what? A slave in my father's house.

And so he makes up his mind and he shakes himself and he turns home, ashamed though he is, miserable though he is, and comes home. And, of course, you know the story. The father runs out and greets him because, again, we're under grace.

We're not under the law. Amen. And that's why we like that story.

Amen. But what does he say to his father? He says the right thing. He presents himself and says, Father, I've sinned against God, against you.

Could I just be a slave? I mean, it's just a picture of this whole passage. Just, please, just let me be a slave in the back corner somewhere. That's all I'm asking.

Just let me serve you. That's all I'm asking. He knew the way to the right kind of life was to serve his father.

He's admitting, I was a slave to this thing and I was wrong. I don't want that anymore. And he presents himself.

And, of course, then what does the father do? Kill the fatted calf? Put a ring on his finger? Bring the best clothes? And that's the way it is with Christian life. You know, when you're a slave of the king, you become, strangely enough, a joint heir with the king. The prodigal son story actually makes no sense, really.

I mean, logically, the father maybe should have put him on probation or beat him. I don't know what he should have done. But he didn't.

And Christianity, I'm sorry, doesn't make sense. Because it's under grace. It's not under law.

Now, again, God cares about how we walk and that's why these words about holiness are in here. But you can't walk that walk of holiness on your own strength. You need the loving arms of your father to carry you along and help you.

And it's not how you walk, it's with whom you're walking. And again, that will affect the way that you walk and where you walk and how you get there. But we get it turned around sometimes in this thing.

Okay, another way to say that, this point of slavery is who we obey, we end up serving. Okay? Who we obey, we end up serving. Who we obey, we end up serving.

Did I spell that right? S-E-R-V, yeah. Okay, let's go down to verse 20. Well, let's go on down to 21, actually.

This is the third thing. Remember we said that the choices you make can lead to three things. Slavery to sin or slavery to God.

Slavery to sin or slavery to God. fruit can be a fruit you're ashamed of or a fruit unto holiness. So 21 is what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

Again, there's that word death. I don't believe the word death here in this passage, and we'll look at it again in verse 23, is just when they put you in the ground at your funeral. There are things that die spiritually.

Have you ever seen somebody walking around who used to be a lively, on-fire Christian, and we even say sometimes, you know the light's gone out of his eyes. There's just something wrong. It's almost like something has died in him.

There are other kinds of death than the death that puts you in the ground. Now, I do believe this death is that death that can put you in the ground, and also that final spiritual separation from God, which is the eternal death. But you know, there's other ways to die as well.

And the fruit of choosing to let sin be who you obey, and you end up serving, brings death in your life. Death to your spiritual life. Death to your joy.

Death to the grace in your life. Death to good relationships in the home. Death to good relationships in the church.

Many times in the church, we've had a wonderful relationship with somebody. They end up getting into some sin. Things grow cold and distant, and we wonder, what's happened? We used to be so close, but it's like something's died between us.

Well, sin brings death. There are many types of deaths. And that's what this is saying here.

You know, each of us again, can look back at our lives and think of things that we are ashamed of. Things that we've experienced. And sin brings shame.

No matter how small it may seem, shame is that dirty blot in our mind. That awareness of our unworthy, our unripe actions. And then the shame of having done those things or thought about those things is very painful.

And I say shame is not a bad thing. Shame is the recognition that there is still some hopeful life in your conscience. That this is not right.

You know, and there's some shame there. It's not all a bad thing. Alright, then in verse 22 it says, But now, being made free from sin... And notice he keeps using the word free and slave.

He uses it again, servant. But freedom and slavery. It's so interesting how those two words can somehow, the paradox of the Christian life is often amazing to me.

The way up is the way down. And to be free, you have to become a slave. You make some of these things at first, when we say them, we kind of go, what? And yet, the spiritual reality is true.

The way to be free in Christ is to surrender all to Christ and become a slave and become a servant. And then we become free. And that's what he's saying.

But now being made free from sin and become slaves, servants to God, you have your fruit on the holiness and the end everlasting life. So the fruit or the result in your life of becoming a slave of God is what? Liberty and license to do whatever I want. Holiness.

Strange combination, isn't it? Doesn't work the way men think. We think the way to get holiness is to make a lot of rules and regulations and then we better keep them and make sure the deacons check up on everybody and all those kind of things. Churches have spent millions of hours figuring all that stuff out and it doesn't work.

It doesn't work. This is what works. It's becoming a slave to God.

It's selling out everything to God and giving Him control. And yes, it leads to holiness. And there is a false gospel.

And the reason that we have to preach this passage, the reason God put it in here is almost as if He could look down the corridor of time, I believe, to the year which we live in because the gospel in the Western world doesn't dare look at these passages. Or they look at them and they come up with crazy things like we are perfect, all the sinless perfection stuff, I never sin. The Christian scientists have the same basic teaching.

They say they live in a spiritual level where their body isn't real. Brother Mose, am I right on? That's why they're never sick, I think, because this isn't their real body. And they don't really, even though they sin, it's not sin because that's not really them.

The real them never sins. I can't quote it all right. I think I'm right on some of that.

But even worse than that is there's, you know, the Baptist churches of today, the Methodist churches, the evangelicals in general, they don't understand this. They would preach holiness, but then they would go live totally unholy life because to them what they mean by holiness is positional sanctification. They mean, well, I'm in Christ, so I have holiness.

But God is saying there'll be fruit. I'm sorry, positional doesn't give you fruit. Fruit is evidenced by the way you walk.

You know, you don't get fruit on an apple tree just because you have some apple seeds in a packet in the back of your greenhouse. You know, those are apple seeds and positionally it is an apple tree. But in reality, there ain't no fruit until you plant it and water it and work with it and fertilize it until fruit comes out, right? It does take some work for those things to happen.

All right, verse 23. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Life and death are presented.

It all comes down. All of this is being said in all these verses. It finally comes down to what do you want? Life or death? The first part of the verse.

For the wages of sin is death. Second part of the verse. But the gift of God is eternal life.

And I've already described death. Death is more than just going in a coffin at the end of your earthly life and the darkness of the tomb and the decay and the rot of your physical body. There can be darkness come into the life of a Christian.

There can be decay and rot, spiritual death in your life now. It's almost as if he's raising the question what good is it to be born again and raised up with Christ if you're still going to have the wages of sin in your life? You know, the devil is a good bookkeeper. He's a paymaster.

You know what a paymaster is? We don't have those anymore, I guess. In the old days, if you wanted to get paid at the end of the work week, you had to go see the paymaster. And he would add up your wages for the hours you've worked and he would pay you according to the wages that you'd earned.

You know the devil? In this area, the devil is totally honest. I'll say it that way. He will give you your wages.

Death. You work for him as a slave. You put in your time of sin.

He'll meet you on judgment day. He'll be happy to close that account out and fully pay you everything you deserve. No problem.

He's a very good bookkeeper when it comes to sin. Very good. He will not miss that payment date.

He'll be happy to help you cash that check. No problem. But interestingly enough, with God, you can't pay or get paid or earn.

It's a gift. Did you notice it even here? But, the gift of God is eternal life. Because it's of faith so that it can be of grace, right? It must be of faith, as it says in Romans 4, that it must be grace.

It must be of faith so that it can be of grace. You know, I wrote up here, who we obey, we end up serving. Let me say it another way.

Who we obey, we end up reflecting in our character. Who we obey, we end up reflecting in our character. You know, one's way of life, one's values, one's philosophies are not best expressed by our words.

They are best expressed in the choices that we make. And that's what this passage is saying. Who we really are.

The philosophy of Rick Leiby. The values of Mo Stoltzfus. You know, who you really are, Rhoda, are best expressed not by what words you may say, but by who you obey and the choices that we make every day.

And those choices reflect who we are, but they also reflect who we serve, and they also reflect the character of the servant, and they express who we really are and what we really are. And in the long run then, our lives, what Paul is saying here, are shaped. And we shape our lives by our choices.

This passage is a passage of choices. And it seems like it's a daily choice. I'm sorry that it's a daily choice.

I know so many people wish it were a once and done thing. I thought, Brother Rick, that when I became a Christian, it would be easier. No.

It's not easier. Now, you have somebody to help you that makes it easy. You can cast your burdens upon Him, but you still have to make the choice to cast the burden upon Him.

Okay? There's still going to be temptation. The Bible never promised that when you become born again and have a new nature, that temptations won't be tempting. If they weren't tempting, they wouldn't be temptations.

But we have One, a High Priest, who understands our frame, who is tempted in all points like as unto we are. Amen? And so we can give Him those temptations even and say, please take them. I can't handle them.

They're too tempting for me. You know, if sin weren't attractive, we wouldn't need passages like this. But let's be honest.

Sin is attractive. Sin is fun. Sin allures.

Sin draws people. Your heart, your eyes, whatever it is. And the sad thing is it's a lie.

Because then you become a slave. And then, who you obey, you end up serving. That's sin.

And so that's why this passage has to be here. Our way of life, our values, are not best expressed by our words. They're expressed by our choices.

I think I'd like to end today, sort of wrap this up with I read an allegory years ago. I don't remember where I read it, so I cannot give proper credit to whoever wrote this. There's a little booklet.

I can't even remember who gave it to me or where I saw it now. It's probably been 20 years ago. And in this allegory, the Christian life is set in a house.

It's set in a particular physical structure and somehow in the allegory it's in the first person. The person and the house are sort of the same. In other words, the person's in the house, but the house reflects the character and the reality of who the person is.

And the person is in the house, and yet the house is the person. And I don't know how to say all that, but allegories are kind of that way. If you've read Pilgrim's Progress, you know what I mean.

There's a lot of allegories in there. The whole thing, I guess, is an allegory and a story that tries to maybe paint a picture with words, so to speak, much like the book of Isaiah. The book of Isaiah is a book full of allegories and a book full of pictures that are painted with words to try to make a point or to tell a story in such a way that we can begin to understand it.

It's a little bit different than a parable that Jesus used, but it's more of an allegory. But anyway, I read this allegory, and I'll just try to share it as I remember it and maybe conclude with that as a summary somewhat of this passage. And it goes something like this.

So allow me to give me the grace to speak in the first person here a little bit, because that's the way I remember the allegory. In my house, I have come to know Jesus, and He comes and visits me there, and

because of Him, my house doesn't look the same anymore. There's new paint on the walls.

The family room looks different. The TV is gone. The basement is cleaned out.

A lot of things that shouldn't be there are no longer there. And He comes by and we sup and we dine, and we have fellowship in my house. I enjoy Him coming by, and when He comes by, it really blesses my house and it blesses me, and it helps me and it gives me strength.

I need those visits, and I really appreciate when Jesus comes. But one day, last week, He came and as we were visiting in the family room, He said, what is that smell? I acted like I didn't know what He meant, but I knew what He meant. And I said, what do you mean? And He said, well, I smell something that's rotten or decaying, and nothing like that should be in your house, should it? And I said, no.

And He said, what do you want to do about it? And I said, well, the truth is, I can't do anything about it. It's that closet upstairs in the back corner of the attic, and it's not a very big closet, but I don't seem to be able to clean it out. I don't seem to be able to do what I need to do.

And He said, well, isn't that what I've been telling you all along? You can't do it, but you have to allow me to do it. Will you give me the key? And I gave Him the key and we went up there, and I couldn't hardly stand it, but He cleaned it out. It was shameful.

It was embarrassing, all the rotten stuff that was in there that was corrupted and stinking, and He took it out and He got rid of it. Not only did He get rid of it, He painted it all new, and it looked wonderful. But the really sad part of the situation was He looked at me and then said, now, how many more times am I going to have to come do this? Because that was the tenth time in the last year that He had to come and clean the same closet out.

And I said, but I don't know what to do about it. And He said, oh, you know what to do, but the choice is yours. And so I said, okay, I'm ready.

So we went down to the office of my house there where I lived, my abode, and I took out my strong box and I opened it up and I took out the deed to the house. And I signed it over to His name and I gave Him everything. I gave Him full and 100% authority.

And He said, now, as you do that and as you sign that over to me, you realize now that this is my property, that it will become under my authority. As long as you keep ownership of this property, I can only visit. But I will not be Lord and Master because it is not my house.

But once you sign it over to me, then I can take care of everything that needs to be done here because it will be my property and no longer yours. I agreed and I signed over the property to Him and gave Him everything and asked Him if I could stay on and just be a servant in the house that used to be mine. And He raised me up and embraced me and said, not only servant, but we'll be co-owners.

But we'll do it together and I'll be here to help you every day. And so that's sort of the allegory. If you can see the difference, I'm afraid too many of us are living the Christian life where Jesus visits us a lot and He comes over to our property, but we've never really signed everything over to Him.

And the funny thing is, as long as Jesus is just visiting, He really doesn't have the authority to go clean that closet out. He doesn't have that place to go take charge of it. But if we can give Him everything, sign it all

over to Him, sign the deed over to Him, yield as it says here, yield everything over to Him, then we become slaves or servants to Jesus Christ and He's in charge.

And guess what? The house is still going to get cleaned. The house is still going to need to be made pure, but then it's done out of love for Him and out of appreciation for Him for letting me stay and letting me be part of the work and not casting me out, which is what He should have done, but by grace, not only accepting me, but allowing me to be part of His plans and part of what He has there. So may God help us see these things about choices and the difference between positional sanctification and understanding that practical sanctification is simply obeying Jesus Christ and living for Him every day.

Amen. God bless you. Thank you.

Amen. Let's do it. I just noticed the summary there, Brother Rick, in verse 22.

Beautiful, four-point outline summary there. Now be made free from sin, that's the forgiveness and justification, and become servants to God. There's the sanctification, the obedience, the baptism, the going on with God.

Now you have your fruit on the holiness, more of the same, and in the end everlasting life. Total sanctification. And the end of the battle, the end of the fight, and oh may God make us walk in that way and experience that complete steps there, those four steps.

Well, amen. That is so refreshing to over and over again adjust our theology on the basis of the written Word of God to see what we believe, where we're at. Oh, what a blessing that is.

And perhaps enlighten the young ones among us to see where there are still things missing. And why there's such an attraction to the world, or to sin, because we have not yielded our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. And it gets as practical as Brother Rick started with there.

It gets as practical as to think about our eyes and our ears and our mouth, our tongue, our hands, our feet, where we go, what we do. That has to do with the practical sanctification in our life. If we want to please God, we cannot do the things we used to do.

Oh, God. Thank You so much for Your Word that shows us the way to walk. Praise His precious Name.

Alright. Someone else has to have a word here this morning. Raise your hand.

We'll get a microphone to you. And let you share likewise. Over here.

Tommy. Amen. I just want to give thanks to the Lord this morning and give testimony about what the Lord has done in my life over the years.

Just a couple of thoughts as Brother Rick was preaching this morning. I am one of those people that, in fact, would sneak out at night, in the middle of the night, and creep out and go do things without my wife knowing it. Just leave her there, sleeping in bed, and I would go out and get a taxi and go to a place and get a taxi and come back home and all of that, just wicked life, and without her knowing it.

And sin can lead you down that road to, you become such a slave. And I mean, the whole while, your mind is telling you, you know, this is just really silly. But at the same time, there is something that you just can't say no to it, because you're a slave to it.

And I just want to praise God, give testimony that he has, in fact, set me free, and that he does set us free from that kind of slavery. And I was thinking this Men's Leadership Conference that four years ago I gave testimony on the Monday night of the Men's Leadership, and at that time I was still in a state where I had to testify that I would still get these sort of flashbacks or these strong desires to just leave this life and go back into the world that I had once been in. And I want to stand before you and give testimony that God's grace has continued to work in my life since that day, and those flashbacks or strong desires, whatever you want to call them, they have become so infrequent now, and they have become so small in their power.

And I consider that to be a gift of God. He has just continued to work in my soul and wash those things from my heart and mind, and I just want to praise him today and thank him for the reality of eternal life that has begun here and now. That's right.

That's the grace of God. Okay, brother. E.G.? Yes, as I was listening to the message, I was thinking of the verse in Hebrews chapter 2, where it speaks about Jesus.

I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And it seems like that Jesus had such a passion to reveal to the people who Father is, and his love and his righteousness, his goodness, his desire to bless people. And he says, if you just know the Father, you will have no problem giving everything to him.

He can take much better care of your life, of your future, or every choice you need to make. And it comes back then to the righteous shall live by faith. Faith that God loves me, he has all power to protect me, and he has secured the future of mine.

And so if you don't meditate upon God, and if his name is not revealed to us, his character, it seems like all these things become very hard and burden. To obey God is such a burden then. But if you know him, it becomes the most easy thing and blessed life, abundant life, Jesus is talking about.

So my desire is that my faith will be strong in love of my Father and to obey him. Amen. Thank you.

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