

Bible Sunday Sermon

7-20-25

Sermon Title: “From Paychecks of Death to the Gift of Life”

Text: Romans 6:15-23 (NIV)

Opening Prayer:

“Father God, we come before You today with humble hearts, grateful for Your mercy and the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. As we open Your Word, open our eyes to see the truth, our ears to hear Your voice, and our hearts to obey. Teach us, Lord, what it means to be set free from sin and to live as servants of righteousness. Let Your Holy Spirit guide every word spoken and stir us to walk in holiness. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

1. Opening Illustration

Think about your first job. Remember waiting for that paycheck? You “sold” your time and energy, and at the end of the week the boss owed you wages. Now imagine if every hour you worked actually subtracted from your life instead of adding dollars to your bank account. That is Paul’s shocking picture of sin: it always pays—but the currency is death.

2. Historical Context

- Author & Setting – Paul writes from Corinth around A.D. 57 to a mixed Jewish-Gentile church in Rome. The empire teems with slaves—scholars estimate one out of every three people in the city was enslaved. Everyone hearing this letter felt the metaphor.

- Romans 6 as a Whole – The chapter answers a question raised at the end of chapter 5: If grace increases where sin increases, why not sin more? Verses 1-14 answered with baptism imagery (“dead to sin, alive to God”). Verses 15-23 answer with slavery imagery (“slaves to the master we obey”).

3. Verse-by-Verse

Romans 6:15 NIV

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!

Grace is not a free-pass card; it is a free-transfer card—from one master to another.

Modern Example: A prisoner receives a governor’s pardon. He is released from jail, but

not to crime. Freedom creates a new life, not license for the old one.

Romans 6:16 NIV

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Slavery then: The Roman master held legal ownership; the slave's body was the master's property.

Slavery now: Whatever habit, relationship, or ideology you continually obey becomes your functional master.

Application: Who gets the first and loudest “yes” from you—Jesus or something else (career, pleasure, bitterness, phone)?

Romans 6:17-18 NIV

But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. [18] You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Paul breaks into praise. Why? Because the gospel not only forgives past sins; it re-enslaves our hearts to a better owner.

Example: Changing Wi-Fi networks. When you disconnect from “SIN-HOTSPOT,” you must log onto “RIGHTEOUSNESS-NET” or you are offline. Christianity is not spiritual limbo; it is a living connection to a new Lord.

Romans 6:19 NIV

I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as

you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.

Paul admits the metaphor is limited—but it lands.

Past Life: “slaves to impurity and ever-increasing wickedness” (think addictive spiral—drugs need higher doses, anger explodes easier).

New Life: “offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.”

Practical Step: Start each day with a simple prayer—“Jesus, I’m reporting for duty.” Then act on the first righteous prompting He gives (call a hurting friend, confess a hidden sin, turn off a toxic show).

Romans 6:20-21 NIV

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. [21] What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!

Sin pays, but its fringe benefits are shame and death.

Modern Mirror: Porn promises escape, then chains you in isolation. Greed promises security, then erodes relationships. Gossip promises camaraderie, then soils reputations—including yours.

Romans 6:22 NIV

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

Holiness is not sterile; it is healthy. Think of a flourishing tree—roots deep, fruit sweet. That is the life Christ grows in surrendered people.

Romans 6:23 NIV

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Illustration: Two envelopes on Judgment Day—one marked “PAYCHECK” (contains a pink slip of eternal separation), the other marked “GIFT” (contains adoption papers signed in Jesus’ blood).

4. Bridging Then and Now: Practical Applications

1. Identify Your Master

Reflection Question: Where do my thoughts drift when I'm tired or stressed? That reveals the master I find comforting.

2. Change Your Offering

Paul says “offer yourselves” (v. 19).

Deliberately redirect the same members (brain, mouth, hands) that served sin:

- Mouth—was gossip → now encouragement
- Phone—was secret viewing → now Bible app and accountability texts
- Wallet—was self-indulgence → now generosity

3. Walk the New Path Daily

Tip: Use **Romans 6:13 NIV** as a morning creed: **“Lord, today I offer every part of myself to You as an instrument of righteousness.”**

4. Expect Growing Holiness, Not Instant Perfection

Slavery to righteousness still involves learning obedience (Heb 5:8).

Hebrews 5:8 NIV

Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered

When you stumble, run back to the gift, not the paycheck.

5. Share the Better Master

The world knows sin's wages all too well. Your freedom story is living proof of a different economy. Tell it!

5. Conclusion & Invitation

In Rome, a slave could be liberated through a ceremony called manumission. But Paul describes something even greater: we are not only freed—we are purchased by God for life.

Call to Unbelievers:

If today you realize you're still cashing sin's paycheck, the gift is on the table. Trust Christ's finished work; receive eternal life.

Call to Believers:

If you've accepted the gift but drifted back to the old boss's break room, remember whose mark you bear. Present yourself again—body, mind, schedule—to the Master whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light.

6. Closing Prayer:

“Father God, thank You that while sin always pays in death, You freely give life through Jesus. Help us this week to recognize competing masters, to yield every faculty to righteousness, and to walk in the freedom that produces holiness. In Christ's name, Amen.”