

Slide 1

We Are People Who Gratefully Serve Our Lord

ROMANS 6:16-18

Introduction

1. Over the last few weeks we have looked at who we are as Christians.
 - a. What is significant about our lives?
 - b. Who are we?
2. During that time we have learned that we are . . .
 - a. Each a new creation of God, those who have been born again to a living hope (2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 1:3).
 - b. His special people (1 Peter 2:9), those whom He loves (Romans 1:7), citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20).
 - c. People who live by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7).
 - d. Sanctified, set apart by God in order to live holy lives before Him because our bodies are the temple of His Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).
 - e. People “who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5).
3. Of course with each of these blessings, we also realized there were responsibilities which God has given to us.
4. Tonight, I would like for us to look that the overarching responsibility which God has given to us.
5. In order to introduce this responsibility, I need to direct your attention to something which Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome — it is found in chapter six of his letter.
6. Earlier, in chapter 5, Paul had written about “the abundance of grace” and “the gift of righteousness” which God makes available to us through Jesus Christ

(Romans 5:17).

Slide 2

7. In Romans 5:20, he added “The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.”
8. However, Paul knew that the brethren might misunderstand his point and begin to think “if grace is going to abound every time sin increases, I might as well continue to sin, because God’s grace will take care of it.”

Slide 3

9. Perhaps this is why he wrote in Romans 6:1, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” (Romans 6:1-2, NASB95).
10. In verse 6, Paul sums up what happened when we were baptized, “our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves of sin” (Romans 6:6, NASB95).
11. In verse 15, he revisits the issue again: “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!” (Romans 6:15, NASB95).

Slide 4

12. His explanation for this is found in the next three verses:

“Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” (Romans 6:16–18, NASB95)

13. Paul’s point is this — we are all obedient slaves, either slaves of sin or slaves of righteousness.
14. Prior to our obedience to Christ, we were “slaves of sin.”
15. However, when, as Paul put it, we “became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which [we] were committed” we were “freed from sin” and

became “slaves of righteousness.”

16. Tonight, I would like for us to look at the nature of our calling, what it involves and those things which hinder it.

Slide 5

I. We Are Called To Be Servants

A. IT IS A GREAT HONOR

1. Serving God is a great honor.
2. Many Old Testament notaries were referred to by God as “My servant”:
 - a. Abraham (Genesis 26:24)
 - b. Moses (Numbers 12:7)
 - c. Caleb (Numbers 14:24)
 - d. Job (Job 1:8)
 - e. David (2 Samuel 3:18; 7:5,8; 1 Kings 11:13, 32,34,36,38; 14:8)
 - f. Isaiah (Isaiah 20:3)
3. Many of the New Testament writers referred to themselves as servants, either of God or of Jesus Christ:
 - a. Paul — “a bond servant of Christ Jesus” (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1)
 - b. James — “a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1)
 - c. Peter — “a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1)
 - d. Jude — “a bond-servant of Jesus Christ” (Jude 1)
 - e. John — “His bond-servant” (Revelation 1:1)
 - ❑ Literally, each of these men used the word “slave,” (δοῦλος).

5a

B. OUR LORD CAME INTO THIS WORLD AS A SERVANT

1. God, the Father, spoke through His prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 52:13 and called His Son, “My servant”.
2. We often refer to this passage, from Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 as the “suffering servant” passage.
3. It was Jesus, Himself, who said, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).
4. Through His washing of the disciples’ feet He demonstrated the servant mentality which He expected of His followers (John 13:12-17).
5. If you are a servant (slave) of God and of Jesus Christ, you are in good company.

Slide 6

II. Our Service To God Involves Certain Things

A. ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE

1. In Romans 6:16, Paul indicates that we as Christians have presented ourselves to God as “slaves for obedience.”
2. As we have been seeing in our Wednesday evening study for several weeks now, Jesus said that if we love Him we will keep His commandments (John 14:15).
3. In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Paul indicates that we who are Christians are no longer our own.

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20, NASB95)

4. As those who now belong to God, we must do what He says (Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21).

6a

B. ABSOLUTE HUMILITY

1. Without humility, absolute obedience before God is not possible.
2. It is only when we have a humble opinion of ourselves that we are receptive to the idea of complete obedience.
3. Consider the example of the apostle Paul:
 - a. “For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:9–10, NASB95)
 - b. “To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,” (Ephesians 3:8, NASB95)
 - c. “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.” (1 Timothy 1:15, NASB95)

6b**C. ABSOLUTE LOYALTY**

1. A little over a month ago we looked at a statement which Paul made concerning the Thessalonians:

“For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,” (1 Thessalonians 1:9, NASB95)
2. You and I have set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts (1 Peter 3:15).
3. As such, we must always be ready “to make a defense to everyone who asks [us] to give an account for the hope that is in [us] . . . with gentleness and reverence.”
4. Through a hymn, written over 120 years ago by Elisha Hoffman, we sing of such loyalty:

(2nd stanza)

To Christ be loyal and be true;
He needs brave volunteers
To stand against the powers of sin,
Moved not by frowns or fears.

(3rd stanza)

To Christ be loyal and be true;
In noble service prove
Your faith and your fidelity,
The fervor of your love.

5. Such loyalty is worthy of our God who has called us heavenward.

Slide 7

III. We Hinder Our Service When We . . .

A. CHOOSE TO SERVE THE WRONG MASTER

1. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus warned against trying to serve two masters.

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Matthew 6:24, NASB95).

2. Serving the wrong things will make us fruitless (Luke 8:14).

“The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.” (Luke 8:14, NASB95)

7a

B. PLACE LIMITATIONS ON OUR SERVICE

1. There are some who seek to limit how, when and where they will serve.
 - a. When God instructed Moses to go to Egypt and bring the Israelites out of their captivity, Moses responded, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt” (Exodus

3:11).

- b. We must be careful that we do not try to serve God only when it is convenient.
2. Some will seek to limit who they will serve.
 - a. This is what the prophet Jonah attempted to do.
 - b. Most, if not all, of us know how that ended.

7b

C. HARBOR ATTITUDES WHICH DEFEAT US

1. Selfishness

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

(Philippians 2:3–4, NASB95)

2. Self-pity

- a. In 1 Kings 19, following the showdown on Mt. Carmel between Elijah, the prophet of God and the false prophets of Baal, Queen Jezebel put a price on Elijah’s head.
- b. Out of fear, he ran for his life.
- c. Twice, after he arrived at Mt. Horeb, God asked him why he had come there.
- d. His response each time was this: “I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” (1 Kings 19:10, NASB95)
- e. It was self-pity which brought him there, and that same self-pity would prevent him from accomplishing all that God intended if it were not dealt with.

3. Envy

- a. In Philippians 1:15, the apostle Paul wrote of those who were

“preaching Christ” out of “envy and strife.”

- b. He said they were doing so “out of selfish ambition . . . thinking to cause [him] distress in his imprisonment” (v. 17).
 - c. In Galatians 5:21, the apostle Paul listed envy among “the works of the flesh” and said that those who practice such things would not enter the kingdom of God.
4. Desire for recognition
- a. In Matthew 6:1-4, Jesus warned his listeners about “practicing [their] righteousness before men to be noticed by them.”
 - b. He said that such individuals would receive no reward from His Father.

Conclusion

1. Those of us who are Christians here tonight have been blessed with a most precious gift — that of our salvation.
2. It is only fitting that we should demonstrate our gratitude through faithful service to our Lord.
3. Let’s do so with obedience to His command, humility before Him and loyalty to His call.
4. Let’s not do anything which will hinder our faithful service before Him.
5. If you are not a Christian, please know that, according to the apostle Paul, you are serving another master — Satan.
6. He has no concern for your well-being. His only desire is your eternal damnation.
7. Will you not tonight choose to be set free from the power he wields over you and serve a loving master whose desire is your eternal salvation?