

Romans 6 v13-23

Introduction

“One of the greatest and most difficult chapters in the Bible” according to great Scottish preacher and teacher, Dr Chalmers. Paul here is answering the idea that justification by faith leads to antinomianism. This idea shows a complete misunderstanding of the Gospel, faith and baptism. In baptism we outwardly signify, and by faith we inwardly lay hold of new life in Christ.

On the cross he took, not our lower, but our former self – all that we were in Adam, pre-conversion self, the man we once were – and it is now dead. Volume 1 is closed; volume 2 is opened. Life lived unto God. Reckon, estimate, realise this to be so. Sin has no claims on us. We are under no obligation to it. It is unthinkable to go back to old life. Therefore we must not allow sin to keep lording it over us, but once for all yield ourselves to God.

The rest of this chapter is devoted to the act of consecration that men alive unto God must make, and the effect in this life and the next which follows.

Bondage to which we are committed

(a) Paul stresses that everyone is in bondage and therefore a slave to one thing or another. No middle course. No neutral path to follow. No neutral moral condition. Each person is either in bondage to unrighteousness, and therefore sin and moral corruption, uncleanness, iniquity, ending in death (people who say they please themselves and are therefore their own masters are really slaves to sin in one of its many forms), or in bondage and a slave to God. The result of being a slave to God is blessedness, holiness and life. Urgent call to present themselves or yield themselves and their members to God, in order that members might be his instruments, not his ornaments. Yield yourselves and your members. Hand selves and body and possessions to God as people alive from the dead. **“Here I am, take me”, “whose I am, and whom I serve”** (Acts 27:23)

Queen Elizabeth I doubted the loyalty of Francis Bacon. His reply was “I am more yours than I am man’s, and I am more yours than any man”. He belonged to her more than he belonged to anyone else, and his loyalty to her was deeper than anyone else’s.

So with us – all or nothing with God

(b) Thus we are his property and slaves. We belong to the Master 24 hours a day. No corners of life are kept for ourselves. Now to be particular:

Begins with ourselves first, not just possessions. Yourselves – all we are, whole personality, all we have and hope to be. Very inclusive gift. Utterly his for time and eternity.

Then our members – hands, eyes, lips, feet, body, mind, imagination. No longer instruments of uncleanness, falsehood. Answer in temptation – “Hands etc are the Lord’s”. At his disposal, to be instruments of righteousness.

Loved ones – children, wife, husband, and other close relatives. For him to bless and use as he chooses and thinks best. If he suddenly called them into his presence, or sent them to Africa – “They are yours anyway, Lord”.

Your time is the Lord’s. Not just the time spent in spiritual pursuits or even daily work. Our recreation and pleasure time are to be used for his will and glory too.

Money and possessions – house, car – all we often say is “They are mine”. In truth, we are simply his stewards. If we tithe our money, even the remaining nine tenths is to be used in disciplined and business-like way.

Talents – this does not just apply to people with great skill and gifts and intelligence. Ambitions – when a great engineer, who had many achievements to his name, was dying, he said to a Christian friend “Now I have come to the end I can see that all my life I have been doing secondary things [writing unclear]”. Life was out of tune with God. Bear this in mind when choosing courses and options in university – these things need to be prayed over.

God wants them all. We are stealing from God if we think life is our own, because he died for us. We must not think it is enough to give nearly all of our allotment to the Lord, and give the devil the last two square feet, for he will walk through the rest to get to his bit. The unyielded bit is a bridgehead for the devil.

Total commitment of all there is of us with no strings attached. All of us just as we are – even with weaknesses. If acutely aware of spiritual poverty, do not write yourself off saying “God will not be interested in me, only in the great ones” – remember that God is after us and our weakness. He can do something with us. He knows all about us. And **his strength can be made perfect in our weakness.**(2 Cor 12:9)

(c) This call for yielding is once for all. An irrevocable step. Like a marriage vow. But though married only once, promises and love and loyalty can be reaffirmed and renewed. So it is here. The implication can be seen more fully as the years go by. Reaffirm your commitment to God each day. The act must be followed by attitude.

Rev James MacGregor took as his motto for the year 1898 “I believe and I belong”. When we fail to reaffirm, we fail to be fully his.

Fruit which we can bear

We are in one slavery or another. Slavery to sin began at birth. Slavery to God began when we obeyed the Gospel. Each slavery develops, neither stands still. They lead to two entirely different lives, quite opposed to one another.

Either the life of old self or of new self. Either moral deterioration or the glorious process of moral sanctification. Either on the broad road, which leads to destruction, or on the narrow road to life.

(a) Negative and positive result. A paradox occurs:

*“Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free”*

“Whose service is perfect freedom”

Sin shall not have dominion over you (6:14). Not sinless, not eradication. But not its hopeless slave. Not in bondage to it. Promise here of deliverance and freedom. No longer a slave of sin and dupe of Satan. Instead, Christ Jesus reigns over our life

(b) On the positive side, we become **servants of righteousness** (6:18). We bear **fruit unto holiness** (6:22). The grace of God, when it comes into the yielded soul, empowers and transforms. His grace works in and through us. A better quality of life and living follows. Life will resemble God’s. Fruit is the reproduction of the tree that produces it – so, God’s character is to be seen in us. It is his work to produce this character, and our job to see we are rightly related to him. “Take care of the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves”. If we watch our relationship with God, he will look after the holiness. This fruit is real. Not something sentimental.

After the death of R.M.McCheyne, there was found in his writing desk a letter that no other eye had seen. The letter was from a man thanking McCheyne for leading him to Christ. “It was not anything you said that made me first want to come to Christ, it was the holiness that I saw in your very face”.

(c) This life of being united to Christ, freed from sin’s dominion, and fruitful unto holiness – is the life we are made and redeemed for. It is the only life which brings real peace into the soul. When we are entirely his, he assumes responsibility for life, service, work, reputation, supply of needs.

H.C.G.Moule said: “absolute bondsman of sovereign Master who is friend, liberator and deliverer... more than conqueror over oldest temptation.... Assurance that Master will assume responsibility for slave’s every need – physical, moral, mental and spiritual”. Fielding described it: “Freedom from bondage to sin, fruit unto holiness and rest of soul”.

Are you enjoying these things? Then “To whom are we surrendered now?”

Into G Goodman’s office came a Salvation Army lady. Her face lit up with glory from inside, it shone with peace and joy of God. When they had finished the legal business, he asked her how she was saved. She related a sad story: brought up by drunken father. She sat by him while he drank spirits. He would open her little mouth, take half melted piece of sugar dipped in spirits and would put it into her mouth. She loved it. When she touched his arm he would give her a little spoonful of liquor. Thus she became a hopeless drunkard while still a child. She lived in the streets in shame, sin, filth, under power of drink. There was no more wretched creature on God’s earth. Suffered delirium tremors. Eventually found deliverance in Christ. She described it as “like waking from a horrible nightmare. I could hardly believe I was the same person”. Goodman said to her “Often I speak to young people who want to know the

way of deliverance. You must have had many evil habits and strong passions and a corrupt mind. How were you delivered? What is your secret? How do you continue in happy liberty and joy?" Her reply was "I can tell you in a word. Prompt obedience. God gave me light, I walked in it, and I was free".

Gift we shall receive

Born and continue in sin, on broad road that leads to destruction. Sin pays its wages – death (spiritual and eternal separation from God). But new life, surrendered life – brings holiness, and gift of eternal life at the end. Romans speaks of eternal life in future aspect (cf. Jesus stresses also eternal life as present possession). Eternal life *in* (not "through" as in AV) Christ Jesus our Lord. United to him. Triumphant glorious conclusion of relationship to Christ. Life, fullness of life and body and spirit, in God's nearer presence for all eternity. Knowing God. Sharing his glory. Seeing him. Enjoying perfect holiness. No sin, sorrow, tears, partings. Utterly free and unmerited gift. Thus crown of all his blessings to men in and through Christ.

Conclusion

Yield selves to God. Most urgent need of the Church and of individual Christians today. Not called to yield to an idea or truth or church or denomination or system. But to yield to a person – the living Lord. What a change would be wrought in life of any church if this took place. How sad we mistrust him and think he will take mean advantage of us. It is always safe and wise to trust him.

Basic failure – not yielded to God. World has yet to see what God will do through life and the church when utterly yielded. Yielding leads on to a life which is pleasing to God, useful to the world, and really satisfying to ourselves.

Bible in left hand (Life with members, your loved ones, time, talents, - everything). Put it all into God's hand voluntarily, unreservedly and eternally.