



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Romans 6:15-23

"Only Two Masters"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Now for the Scripture reading turn with me to Romans chapter 6, verse 15 through verse 23. Romans chapter 6, verse 15 through verse 23. The apostle in the 6th chapter in the Epistle to the Romans has launched into a discussion of the doctrine of sanctification so far as the general theme is concerned, and now continuing the themes that he has introduced in this 6th chapter he writes,

"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? But God be thanked, that were as ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered 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. (Evidentially, the apostle considered the illustration of slavery to be ultimately insufficient to explain everything, but it serves the purpose of an illustration in the light of the infirmity of human 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. (The word holiness as the word saint, the word sanctify all come from the same root and so it would be possible for us to render this yield your member servants to righteousness unto

sanctification.) 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 (or sanctification), 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."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. The subject for our continuation of the exposition of Paul's letter to the Romans for the morning is "Only Two Masters." It is generally conceded by students of the Bible that Romans 6, verse 1 through chapter 8, verse 17 is Paul's normative passage for Christian living. In fact, it is probably conceded by most Bible teachers that this passage is the biblical normative passage for Christian living. Relief and release come from submission to the teaching that the apostle gives us in these two and a half chapters. In fact, this passage has often been called the gospel for the saint just as the earlier part of the epistle unfolds a gospel for the unbeliever. The major point that the apostle brings home to the reader in Romans chapter 6 is that for the Christian there is no continuance in sin. The apostle does not say that for the Christian there is not sin, but no continuance in sin or non-continuance under the dominion of sin. This seems to be the general theme that he is developing.

Notice for example the 2nd verse where he says, "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer in it?" He's not talking about the possibility of lapse into sin. He's talking about living in sin. In the 6th verse he writes, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not (not sin, but) serve sin." That is the apostle's emphasis that we should not be under dominion to sin. That's what he says in verse 14. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." That's the theme that he continues in the later part of the chapter as well. For there he says in the 18th verse, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." And in verse

22, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

So service to God, service to righteousness, the theme is non-continuance in sin. What the apostle does not say, but what is said elsewhere in the Bible and in the apostle's writings as well if we continue in sin then we are not believers. The kind of salvation that does not bring us any deliverance from sin is not the salvation spoken of in Holy Scripture. The very fact that it is called salvation means that we must have some salvation from sin. The essence of sanctification as is taught here is traced to the believer's union with Jesus Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. What Paul says, essentially, is we are on the far side of our Lord's death, burial, and resurrection. In him as our representative we have judicially passed out of this sphere of life, the old sphere of life, and are now on the other side of the cross identified with him in his death, in his burial, in his resurrection. Paul elsewhere says we've even been raised up and have been made to sit together with him in heavenly places. This is the judicial side of our relationship with the Lord God.

We are on the far side of his death and are now being conformed to the image of the Son of God by the Holy Spirit. And this is going on constantly the apostle wrote in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 18, "But we all, beholding with open face as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are being changed into the same image from glory to glory." He says, "Being confident of this very thing that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it till the day of Christ." We are saved by grace. We are sanctified by grace. We are saved through faith. We are sanctified through faith. We are saved by God so that salvation is of the Lord. We are sanctified by God so that sanctification is of the Lord. So that when we get to heaven we'll not be talking about how we accomplished our salvation or even how we have managed to hold on in our salvation. We shall be praising God for the way in which he has saved us and the way in which he had sanctified us.

Now in this particular section of Romans chapters 6, 7, and 8 there are four new things the apostle stresses. He stresses the new relationship that we have in life which we may call union with Jesus Christ. And in chapter 6, verse 1 through verse 14 it is a judicial union; that is our Lord has

died, has been buried, has been raised again and we are judicially regarded as having been in him. When he bore the penalty for our sin we are reckoned to have been in him and bearing our penalty in him. And when he was raised again from the dead we are reckoned to have been raised in him. The apostle it is clear is speaking of believers in their identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in his work. He's our representative. He's our covenantal head. That's judicial union.

In the passage that we're going to look at in more detail in a moment he elucidates the new principle in life which governs us and it is enslavement to Jesus Christ and righteousness that we can call moral union. In the 7th chapter and the first six verses there he unfolds a new freedom in life, and we are emancipated from the Law of Moses.

Now this particular relationship he likens to a marriage. He says we were married to the old man, now we are married to a new man who has been raised from the dead. And in being married to Christ we are delivered from the old sphere in which the Law of Moses operated. Therefore, he talks about what we could call just for the sake of exposition, marital union. We are married to Christ. What a wonderful relationship that is! There is only one time in my life when I've ever wanted to be a bride, and that's the one occasion; the bride of Christ. I don't have any desire to be a bride in any other way. But I don't mind being the bride of Christ.

Now one final thing the apostle unfolds is the new power in life which he saves for full exposition in the 8th chapter of the epistle the first seventeen verses. There he tells us that the true power of the Christian life resides in the Holy Spirit.

Now just for the sake of a term we'll call it the dynamic union. So the apostle is unfolding union with Jesus Christ, judicially, morally, martially, and dynamically. And this will be the subject of the exposition of the next few weeks. I should have said that in the 7th chapter after unfolding marital union in the first six verses he does raise a couple of questions about that, answers them, and then moves on into the dynamic union, the Holy Spirit, and the life of the believer. In our last study in the first part of Romans chapter 6 the apostle made the point that our response to this representative union that we have with Christ is reckoning. He said in the 11th verse, "Likewise

reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now this reckoning is not a reckoning of something that is not true. Some people like to look at this and say well this is going to be rather difficult because if there is one thing that is true, it is not that I'm dead unto sin and I'm not alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord but by strength of perseverance and by strength of dedication and commitment I'm going to try to reckon this to be true when it is not really true.

Now, of course, that is contrary to the apostle's thought. He's just unfolded how it is true, and he calls upon us here to reckon upon it. Reckon yourselves, you believers who are related to the Son of God, "reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." So the response to this identification is the response of faith. The trust that brought forgiveness when the cross was revealed to us as the solution for the penalty and guilt of our sin is the same trust that brings us freedom from the bondage of sin. Life is by faith. We are saved by faith, and we are delivered by faith in the Christian life. Everything comes from the cross, ultimately. That's why we sing, "Jesus keep me near the cross, there a precious fountain, free to all a healing stream, flows from Calvary's mountain."

Now we turn to the 15th verse of the 6th chapter for Paul's question again. Two questions are the key to Romans chapter 6. The first one in verse 1 and the second one in verse 15. "What shall we say then?" he said in verse 1. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" That was an objection the apostle sought to answer that arose from salvation by grace. He had been teaching that men are not saved by the works of the law. They are not saved by keeping the Ten Commandments. Putting it in our language today, we could say men are not saved by joining the church. Men are not saved by water baptism. Men are not saved by observing the ordinances. Men are not saved by being good citizens. Men are not saved by being benevolent. Men are not saved by loving their neighbors. Men are not saved by education. Men are not saved by culture. Men are not

saved because they live in the United States of America. Men are saved only through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ for all are sinners and all stand under divine judgment.

Now anyone who felt that works was part of the plan of salvation would be offended by this. That's why men are offended by the gospel of Christ. That's why when we preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and call upon men as sinners to believe and say that they are saved only by Christ they are very much offended by it. To say that Christ is the only way of salvation is to offend not only individuals but to offend whole religious bodies committed to another doctrine. But all the reason for this is that men are self-righteous. They want some part in the saving plan of God. They want to have a part. They want to be able to say we have saved ourselves. They're not willing to get down before God and acknowledge that they are what they really are depraved.

Now you can see that someone who has this other view that a man is saved by what he does would be offended by Paul who says we are not saved by what we do but what Christ has done. And furthermore, the apostle is one of these kinds of people who is very dogmatic about his teaching too. He doesn't say now I think it's this way or we in the apostolic church rather hold to this kind of doctrine, but he is very dogmatic about it. And no doubt many times he had been approached by people who said to him something like this, "Why that's an immoral kind of doctrine that you are proclaiming. Do you not realize that when you say we are saved not by anything that we do but by what Christ has done, when we are not saved by our works and we're saved by grace, why you are saying that where sin abounded grace has much more abounded. You're saying, in effect, we can just go on sinning, and therefore, God will go on covering our sin and getting more glory because he's covering more sin. So let's just sin more and more so that his grace may abound more and more that he may get more and more glory. Any kind of doctrine that leads to that is obviously not biblical doctrine," they might say.

So the apostle had answered that. That's an objection that arises from salvation by grace. And he said, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Good heavens, no! "What a ghastly thought," Mr. Philips says. And then unfolds the doctrine of union with Christ. But in verse 14 at

the conclusion of his answer to that question he had said, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Not under law, Paul?

Now there is another objection that arises here and this one is an objection that arises from our state under grace. You mean that we are not under law, not under the Law of Moses? Paul will in the 7th chapter let us know that's what he's talking about because he cites one of the commandments there. Not under the law? Well if we are not under the law then there's no condemnation for sin. If we have no standard like that then we can just pretty well live as we please. Under your doctrine then can we not sin here and there? So the apostle says in verse 15, "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?" Good heavens no! What a ghastly thought.

Now there is an interesting change in the questions from verse 1 to the question in verse 15. I don't like to go against the majority of the commentators; that is the majority of the believing commentators because generally speaking, the majority of the believing commentators are right. If you listen to a Bible expositor and he's always differing from the majority of the believing commentators you can usually put it down that he's a weirdo in that biblical exegesis. [Laughter] And so you should not pay much attention to him. Unfortunately, there are lots of people, they like the sensational, they like the weird, they like the new, they like to say did you hear what doctor so and so said about such and such? And then they unfold some weird interpretation which he has manufactured in the 20th Century. Occasionally you'll find it was one of the heretic's viewpoints back in the 3rd Century long time ago and he's thought of it again thinking it's something new.

Now you will find that the Holy Spirit generally teaches his saints the same kind of language, the same kind of viewpoint. And so when the majority of the interpreters feel that a certain thing is true I hesitate to go contrary to them, and I'm hesitating right now. I just want you to notice one thing that is true. In verse 1 when the apostle said, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" he uses the present tense of this verb continue. Shall we go on abiding in sin? He's talking about a continuation in the life of sin. But in verse 15 when he says, "What then? Shall we sin," he

does not use the present tense of the verb, to sin, here but rather uses the aorist tense here or the tense that means something like undefined action. And it is possible for this to be understood as not a life of sin but of an incidental isolated act of sin.

Now I want to say that the majority of the commentators have not noticed that point, and so they take this question in verse 15 to be essentially the same as that in verse 1. I do not think that would lead us into any error at all, but it is possible that the apostle is asking a slightly different question here. Since we are not under the law but we are under grace as believers is an isolated act of sin permissible? Granted we cannot continue in sin, but is it possible for us every now and then to sin with the approbation of heaven realizing that after all we still have the sin principle dwelling within us?

Now the apostle's answer to that if that is the question he asked is good heavens no! The fact that we do lapse into sin and the fact that our life must be non-continuance in sin, that is the bid of our life must be toward righteousness, does not mean that we have the right to lapse into sin. When we do lapse into sin it is an offense against our holy God.

So if that is what Paul means the following context answers the question very well. So we turn to Paul's end argumentation. One thing that I like about the Apostle Paul is that he does give us reasons why he says the things that he says. There are people who think that after all when we are studying the Bible we ought not to be really bogged down in biblical doctrine. And we should not reason in the things of our faith but devote ourselves more to the devotional side of things. That's a whole lot easier on the audience. They can come on Sunday, and they don't have to think. They can just lapse into a blue funk and listen to what the teacher has to say and not pay a great deal of attention providing they get one or two sweet thoughts while they are there.

Now the apostle was not like that, and it's surely our conclusion from this that God wants us to reason about our faith. Now I know that some of us have more difficulty than others in reasoning. But I'm sure that if you will do this, when you sit down to read the Bible, like an Epistle to the Romans, if you'll just bow your head and say, "Oh, Lord, Thou knowest I have a weak mind.

Enable me to understand the apostle's thinking as he progresses from thought to thought." You'll be surprised at how much over the period of time that you devote to the study of the word God will give you understanding of his word. And you'll come to appreciate the Apostle Paul because he answers those questions which we do have arising within our hearts about our faith, and it enables us to witness more wisely and more understandingly to others who are confused about the faith.

Now it is important for us to remember one or two points as we approach verse 15 through verse 23. Which is not one of the easier sections to the Epistle to the Romans. Let us remember this in the will as we understand what the Bible teaches about the will God tells us in the teaching of the word of God that we are born with a certain inclination. Now that is the state of our disposition. That is the state of our nature. And our inclination is negative toward God; that by reason of the Fall. Our minds are affected by sin. Our wills are affected by sin. Our emotions are affected by sin. So we are inclined to evil; inclined to that which is contrary to the will of God. It may not be moral evil. It may simply be rebellion, lethargy, indifference to the word of God. We are inclined that way.

Now our inclination, our basic nature, leads to specific volition; specific acts of the will. And those specific acts of the will since they arrive from a certain kind of nature and in this case negative toward God are acts that are negative toward God. And then those things issue in acts that are rebellious acts; moral evil, for example, or acts that are representative of our independence of God.

So we have an inclination against God which issues in a volition which finds its final manifestation in acts of evil; the will then, its inclination, its volition, its acts. For example, in the Garden of Eden when the fruit was there when Eve saw that the fruit was good an inclination which previously in her had been toward holiness came to be toward evil. Then she determined to take it. She had already sinned when the inclination arose. The inclination expressed itself in a volition, I want it. And then an action, she took it. She had sinned long before she had actually partook of the fruit. The fall of Eve had already taken place, likewise in Adam.

Now when God the Holy Spirit brings us to faith in Christ what he does is create a new inclination. That's what the Bible means when it says that the man in Christ is a new creation. "Old things have passed away behold all things have become new." A new inclination which is positive toward God is created by the Holy Spirit in new birth.

Now from that there arise volitions toward God. The apostle will speak more plainly about it in Romans 7. How he wants to do the will of God and then that should issue in acts that are pleasing to the Lord God.

Now if you will bear that mind you will understand why Paul says you cannot sin and serve righteousness at the same time, because you cannot have two inclinations that are opposed to one another in the heart at the same time. That's what he means now when he says, "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?" Good heavens, no! "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?" Human beings are created for mastery. We are made to be mastered because we are creatures. We are never anything but creatures. Consequently, we have a limited perspective of life. We have a limited freedom. We are creatures, and we are made to be mastered by someone else. Of course, we are made to be mastered by God. But we may as the apostle says here because of the Fall be mastered by sin. The Lord Jesus said, "Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin."

So we're made for mastery, but we're made for the mastery of one. Consequently, a righteous believer cannot serve two masters. The Lord Jesus makes that so plain in the Gospel of Matthew. "No man can serve two masters for either he will hate the one and love the other or he will hold to the one and despise the other." And then specifically he says, "You cannot serve God and mammon." But he not only says that, he says in the next chapter in the 18th verse, "A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." That's why Paul then says, "Don't you know that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey his servants ye are whom ye obey whether to sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness." Our bias by virtue of our

new birth, our identification with our new representative the Lord Jesus is toward the Lord God now. We've been given a new inclination, and consequently, we cannot serve sin. He's using the analogy of the slave market.

Now a slave was responsible to obey his master unto all circumstance but one. And that one circumstance was death. When death took place his obligation to his old master is gone. And so our obligation to our old master is now gone because we have in our representative died. We have been buried. We have been raised up together with him. Or to use the same analogy in a different way, we could say here is a slave who is the servant of one master, but who is put in the slave market by his master and sold to another master, and therefore, he is obligated to obey the other master and no longer required to obey any commands that the old master might extend to him.

So we are enslaved to righteousness. Ray Steadman in one of his books, his book on the Epistle to the Romans comments upon a personal experience that he had in the city of Los Angeles. He said he was walking down the street one day in the city of Los Angeles and he saw a man approaching him who had a big sign on his back. And as he came closer to the man he read the words of the front of it which said in big letters like one of those old sandwich signs, it said, "I'm a slave for Christ." And then as the man passed he took a backward look at him and there was a question on the back of it. "Whose slave are you?" was the question. Well, regardless of how we may feel about the method of witnessing and of the particular question, it was a biblical question because we are all either the slaves of righteousness or the slaves of unrighteousness. We are all made for mastery, the apostle says.

Now having given that answer which is essentially that we're created for mastery by one or the other of these principles and individuals the apostle in the remainder of the chapter says that now as a slave to righteousness we cannot sin recklessly and unresistingly. Even when we sin we do not like the sin that we have committed. A believer cannot possibly engage in sin and relish that sin. A believer is very unhappy in his sinning. He may lapse into sin, but he's very unhappy about it. Not only because the Holy Spirit brings conviction, but because he himself has a new inclination, and he

wants to please his master. He's like Peter who when he denied the Lord went out and wept bitterly over the fact that he had denied the Lord. No Christian, no true believer relishes sin. If you relish sin there is a serious question about your faith in Jesus Christ, in spite of your profession. That's a very serious point and one the apostles make over and over and over again, and one which, unfortunately, some evangelicals have failed to pay attention to. The Bible makes it very plain that not only should believers not sin, but believers cannot continue in sin. They cannot. If we have been born of God we do not practice sin. I say we may lapse into sin. We may fall into sin, but we are very unhappy when that happens.

So the apostle says then just like the saved life leads to good works so the crucifixion of the old man leads to the yielded life. Now it's not complete sanctification at the beginning. This is a long process of growth. But the bent of a man's life changes when he becomes a Christian. We do not have the right to say to any individual whose life has not undergone a distinct change, "You say you have believed in Christ, you are a Christian." You cannot say that. You can say, "I hope you have believed in Christ, but if you have believed in Christ there has to be a definitive change in your life. You're a new creation that must reflect itself."

Now I don't have to see it, and the person next to you does not have to see it, but it has to be there; a change of life. It's good for us to reflect upon that. The apostle says more than once that we were the servants of sin. Sin is an enslaving thing. Mr. Steadman also has in his little book on Romans an illustration of a personal experience. He said a man came to him one time and said to him, he said I just thought I might let you know what happened after I told a little white lie this morning. He said I counted up the lies that I told the rest of the day in order to cover up that one white lie that I told and there were forty-two lies at the end of the day that I had told in order to cover up that one little white lie. Illustrative of the fact that sin is enslaving. The Lord Jesus said, "Whosoever commiteth sin is the slave of sin." Absolutely right! One of the things that Christians learn is that we do have a new inclination. And to sin once means that we are throwing ourselves under the mastery of that other principle.

Now in the 17th verse the apostle writes something which Martyn Lloyd Jones calls one of the most important statements in all of this epistle, and in fact, one that tells us exactly what a Christian is. "But God be thanked, that where as ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Mr. Jones says this is a definition of what a Christian is. He's a person that has obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine to which he was delivered.

Now I want you to notice a couple of things here, and I wish we had a lot of time but we don't so it will have to be rather brief and to the point. Paul speaks about "form of doctrine." That word in the original text is the word, tupos. It's the word from which we get the word type, for example. That Greek word referred to the mark that a blow made. If I should take a hammer and hit this pulpit this way, or if I should preach like John Knox and just beat the pulpit over and over. You can see the old pulpit that John Knox preached in, in Edinburgh and there's just a big round indentation there was he use to beat his hand like this, you know. [Laughter] And that would be the type. Those would be types. That is the mark made by a blow. It also was used of the contents of a letter in Acts chapter 23. It was used of the impression that a dye made in manufacturing.

So when Paul talks about the form of doctrine he means that mark that doctrine has made. He's talking about something definite, something not vague, but a definite form of teaching.

Now the church has often engaged in the writing of catechisms. When I grew up in the Presbyterian church I was exposed to the catechism. And that catechism was something that we memorized. That's not a bad idea, because it is the condensation of biblical doctrine into a form of doctrine. There is only one thing better as far as I can tell and that's the Bible itself. That's why we don't use catechisms in Believers Chapel. It's not that it's not good; it's just not the best thing. The best thing is to train people in the study of the Bible. There is a distinct form of doctrine, and Paul says believers were delivered to it. That is, they were expected to learn biblical doctrine. We expect you to learn biblical doctrine in Believers Chapel. That's why biblical doctrine is preached, because you were delivered to a form of teaching. You ought to know the facts of the Christian faith. You

also ought to know the consequences if you don't believe these facts of the Christian faith. We're not talking about dogma in the bad sense which is an arrogant human opinion. Strictly speaking dogma and doctrine come from the same root. They both have to do with teaching.

Now it's characteristic of some evangelicals to make a great deal over that fact that we ought not to be concerned about dogma or doctrine. But you cannot be a Christian if you are not concerned about dogma or doctrine, and in fact, that's not a doctrine that a dogma itself. And therefore, something we ought to forget; that is that you shouldn't pay any attention to biblical doctrine. One of the hymn books of the cults has Just as I Am transformed into this stanza. "Just as I am thou wilt receive though dogmas I may never believe. Nor heights of holiness achieve, oh God of love I come."

Well I hate to tell you but if you come to such a God with such a view as that he's not the God of the Bible at all. A man may reach God with dogma in the bad sense, but he cannot reach the God of the without doctrine. And even the very fact that Jesus is the Christ is doctrine. The fact that he died on the cross is doctrine. The fact that he was raised from the dead is doctrine. The fact that you are saved by faith is doctrine. The fact that you are saved through grace is doctrine. Doctrine is important. That's what Paul means. He says you were delivered to this form of teaching. And notice, he doesn't say as our English text here in the Authorized Version says in verse 17 that that was delivered to you. It really in the Greek text says you were delivered to it. It's almost as if God said now I want to take you and deliver you over to doctrine.

Now I don't know a whole lot about painting. I've looked at a lot of painting. I've look at paintings all over Europe. I've gone in museums and stood before the great masterpieces, and I must confess there is something missing in my art mind. I do not really understanding painting. Not too long ago I was in London. I sat down before one of the great masterpieces and even had a bible; well it was a chapter from the bible, from the art bible. It was an exposition of this particular painting. I must confess I got a little bit more out of it than I had before. But I can remember in Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam going in and standing before the Night Watch, that famous big painting

and everyone would rush into the Rijksmuseum and say, where's the Night Watch? And so they would run in and stand there and this kind of angelic look would come over their faces. [Laughter] They were getting something. Like some people in a Bible exposition, they are getting it, you know. They are really in it. You can tell by the smile on their faces, but others they're sitting over there, they're not sleeping yet. Sometimes they are kind of antagonistic. They're reacting negatively to it. They're not getting it. I confess I'm not getting it when it comes to art.

Well there was a curator of a museum who said once in connection with this, he said, "It's not the people who judge the paintings. It's the paintings who judge the people." And so when I stand before the Night Watch and I say I don't get it. It's not so great. The Night Watch stands in all of its splendor and glory. People just know that I don't know anything about painting. Well the same thing is true about biblical doctrine. You have been delivered to biblical doctrine. Maybe you don't get anything out of it. That only shows that you don't get it. The Bible doctrine is just a glorious, and beautiful, and necessary and healthy as ever. You may not get it, but nevertheless, it is there as that which you as a Christian have been delivered and you're responsible to get your page of exposition out and sit down and look at the word of God and profit from it.

Well the remainder of the verses of this section speak along the same lines. The apostle rings the changes on it. He says in the 18th verse, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness," this new inclination which led to new volitions and new actions. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh. My illustration of the slave market of sin is insufficient for the reality, but we are men.

"For as ye have yielded your member servants to uncleanness and unto iniquity even so now yield your member servants to righteousness unto sanctification. 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? (Notice ashamed of sin.) For the end of those things is end. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

So the apostle says the return you get is sanctification and ultimately, eternal life from the life of service to the Lord God. And when he says in verse 22, "the end is everlasting life," he lets us know that these two patterns of life unrighteousness, unholiness, acts of sin has its reward but it's a wage. It's something you can earn. When you get to hell, if any of you get to hell, I hope you don't but you can say down there give me my wages. Give me what I have earned and that is what you will get because hell is earned. "The wages of sin is death." That is what you earn. But heaven, when we get to heaven shall we say give me what have earned? Oh no! We shall not say that because we do not earn it. And you'll notice the apostle makes that very plain. He says now,

"Being made free from sin become the servants to God you 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." What is eternal life but everything that is good for my body, I appreciate that. I look out at some of you and you're nice and healthy. The death principle is already working in you even in those little children. It's already at work. You are dying people, even you children. You are dying people. You adults, you are dying people. And you older people, your dying people. Death comes.

Eternal life is everything that is good for the body for we are going to get a resurrection body. Some people are so proud of their present one that they'd like to have a new lease on life for it when they get to heaven. [Laughter] No, no, no we're going to have something even better than that. It's all that is good in relationship to my soul. I shall not have that desire to turn away from the Lord God to be indifferent to the things of the truth, to be lethargic, to be dead toward spiritual things, to not desire to read the word of God, and to advance in holiness. All of those things will be gone. My spirit shall be in tune with the Lord God. Eternal life, what a magnificent gift that comes to those whose inclination has been changed by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. What a triumphant conclusion.

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Do you have it? Do you have this gift of eternal life? And if you are a Christian and you have it, is it characteristic of you that you have become the servants of righteousness? The apostle does not write these things in order to tell us that we should not sin, but he writes these things to tell us if we're genuine believers we cannot go on in sin. So may God speak to us.

If you are here without Christ we invite you to come to Christ that you might be saved, and receive the free gift and not get the wages due you for the work that you have done. Come to Christ. Believe in him. Receive the free gift of everlasting life. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, how wonderful it is to have revealed to us so plainly and clearly that our salvation is a gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. If there are some here Lord who have never believed, O at this very moment, may they in their hearts say I thank Thee Lord for the gift of Jesus Christ. I trust in him and his saving work alone. I renounce any trust in my sinful self and trust in Christ.

And for us who are believers, Lord, O God help us in our Christian lives to manifest the holiness that belongs to a true believer. For Jesus' sake. Amen.