

This lesson teaches that by the grace of God Christians are no longer slaves to sin but are obedient to the service of righteousness. Paul is concluding his long discussion of the way in which disciples have been given a right relationship with God through faith. They are no longer set on a course that leads through immorality to death. To use a very human analogy, they are now slaves of righteousness and are bound to the service of God, which leads to holiness and eternal life.

Listen now as I read this passage from the book of Romans

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! 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? 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. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

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. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 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. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in<sup>[a]</sup> Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Matthew 10:34-42

In our gospel Jesus warns his disciples of troubles to come, but offers them the assurance of the Father's care and his own readiness to support them before God when they speak up for him. Because they are Jesus' disciples, people will do to them what they did to him. There will be persecution and divided families, but disciples are not to be afraid. They are to love Jesus more than father or mother, son or daughter, and to be willing to lose their own lives for Christ's sake. Those who live in this way will actually find their true lives, and God will hold them fast.

Hear now these words from the Gospel of Matthew.

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn

“a man against his father,

a daughter against her mother,

a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law -

a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.’

“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

“Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

Liturgist: This is the gospel message of our Lord and Savior

**All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.**