

SLAVES TO CHRIST

Every person in the world is a slave to something! We are either enslaved to sin or we are slaves of Christ. As believers, we recognize Jesus as our God-Master and ourselves as His slaves.

In Romans 6 Paul is clear that we as believers are now dead to sin and alive to God. He emphasizes that whereas we WERE slaves of sin we NOW have become slaves of God (v. 17-18, 22). Conversion involves a change of Master. Romans 6:17 explains, "though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered."

Saving faith involves an obedient response of the heart that recognizes Christ as both Savior and Lord/Master (see Rom. 1:5, 16:26). The whole surrounding context of Romans 6:17 relates to what or who is your Master. The "**form of doctrine**" to which they had obediently responded was the Mastership/Lordship of Christ. It was a heart commitment that recognized Christ's sovereign authority and involved allegiance to Him as God (cf. Rom. 6:20, 22-23). Jesus was now their God-Master (Lord)!

Without exception, in Romans Christ is spoken of as being Lord of all believers (cf. Rom. 1:3, 4:24, 5:1, 5:11, 5:21, 6:11, 6:23, 7:25, 8:39, 15:6, 16:18, 16:20, 16:24). True believers recognize this reality in conversion as Romans 6:17 indicates.

Every person has one of two Masters. Either SIN is their Master and death is the result, or JESUS is their Master with the result being everlasting life (cf. Rom. 6:23).

As Savior, Christ died for all of our sins; as Lord over all, He rose again (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3-4). This is the FULL GOSPEL! This is the gospel truth we must personalize in order to be saved (cf. Rom. 5:8, 10:9-10).

As believers, we can be ignorant of our Master's will, we can be disobedient to our Master's will, but in salvation, we "**obeyed from the heart**" the truth of Who Christ is as Savior and Lord. Now, the challenge is to live consistent with this reality, which is the challenge of Romans 6. MANY call Jesus Master but it's not true in their heart (cf. Mt. 7:21-23). They have never really "obeyed from the heart" this form of doctrine. If Jesus is our Master the fruit (or lack thereof) will show in our life.

Romans 6:22 (NKJV)

22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

1 Corinthians 7:22–23 (NKJV)

22 For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave.

23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

Paul is very clear that every believer has been bought at a price, namely with the blood of Jesus, and that they now belong to Christ as His slave. The word "slave" (Gk. *doulos*) appears no less than 130 times in the New Testament. A servant retains certain freedoms that a slave does not. Slavery in the Bible denotes ownership. Jesus now owns us! We belong to Him.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NKJV)

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Paul repeatedly referred to himself as a "slave" of Christ (Gal. 1:10). Peter also called himself a "slave" of Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:1). John the apostle indicated that for all eternity, true believers would be slaves of Christ.

Revelation 22:3–4 (HCSB)

3 and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His slaves will serve Him.

4 They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.

In speaking to believers who were masters over physical slaves, Paul instructed them to be just and fair in their treatment of their slaves, "knowing that you also have a Master in heaven." (Col. 4:1). All believers have Christ as their Master. There is no exception. Now, a believer can be disobedient to their Master, but Jesus is still the Master.

1 Peter 2:16 (HCSB)

16 As God's slaves, live as free people, but don't use your freedom as a way to conceal evil.

Peter hits the right balance. As believers we have freedom in Christ and yet paradoxically, we are His slaves. We are not free to serve self. No, we have been freed from sin to serve Christ. We don't have freedom from any master whatsoever! No! Now we have Christ as our MASTER!

As Christians we have had a CHANGE of masters (cf. Rom. 6:22). We are now free to serve Christ as our rightful Master and He calls us to obey the governing authorities that He has ordained (which in context is what Peter is emphasizing).

What rights do slaves really have? They are to do the Master's will. We have the freedom to serve God! Yes, we are "free" from sin and yet we are "God's slaves". This is our true status, and we are called to live in light of it.

As our Lord, Jesus is our Master and we are His slaves. Jesus bought us with His blood (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We now belong to Him. Recognition of His sovereign authority is a matter of saving faith. Now the great challenge is to live consistently with who we really are as free in Christ and yet His slaves.

Jesus is Lord! This truth rings true in the heart of every true believer. It is the very nature of a true SAVING FAITH!

A believer is a SLAVE to the Savior and is at war with his sin (Rom. 6; Col. 3). A nonbeliever is a SLAVE to sin and is at war with the Savior (Jn. 8; Rom. 5:10).

"I have no doubt that this perpetual hiding of an essential element of New Testament revelation [that believers are slaves of Christ] has contributed to much of the confusion in evangelical teaching and practice. In fact, I wonder if it wasn't the reason I felt the need to write so many books to clarify the gospel. If this one reality had been known, would any of those books have been necessary?" – **John MacArthur** in the Preface to his book titled **SLAVE**

By default, this truth that believers are the SLAVES of Christ shows that Christ is the LORD (Master) of all believers. This single truth destroys the false "Lordless Gospel". Jesus is LORD of all true believers!

One cannot deny this and yet hold to true orthodoxy! Christ's LORDSHIP over all believers is clearly seen in the fact that all believers are His blood-bought SLAVES!