

Media Notes

[Media Notes]

Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about the implications of living as a slave to sin or a slave to God and addresses how to move from one to the other.

Why is this sermon important?

This sermon is important because recognizing our life of sin and subsequently living a life with God is essential to our life as disciples of Jesus Christ.

What is the context of this sermon?

This is the second week of a series of sermons

What are the next action steps?

Ask for God to receive forgiveness and be free from sin today.
Live a holy life.

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that Jesus Christ sets us free from sin to live a holy life today.

Metadata

1. Topic(s)
 1. sin, forgiveness
2. Sermon Books of the Bible
 1. 1 Peter, 1 Timothy, James, Luke, Mark, Romans
3. Series
 1. Today
4. Speaker
 1. Andrew Conard
5. Tags
 1. forgiveness, sin, today, new, holy, life, grace, prevenient, justifying, sanctifying



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1st Sunday after the Epiphany/Baptism of the Lord [White]

January 11, 2015

Today - I am free from sin.

Romans 6:15-23

First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

Preaching Target Word Count: 2,447

Text Online at <http://j.mp/1rB69DF>

Video is not available online

Fully in the Light - Christian Perfection

Conclusion - I am free from sin.

10

Good News

Call to Action

Invitation

Closing Prayer

Romans 6:15-23, CEB

15 So what? Should we sin because we aren't under Law but under grace? Absolutely not! 16 Don't you know that if you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, that you are slaves of the one whom you obey? That's true whether you serve as slaves of sin, which leads to death, or as slaves of the kind of obedience that leads to righteousness. 17 But thank God that although you used to be slaves of sin, you gave wholehearted obedience to the teaching that was handed down to you, which provides a pattern. 18 Now that you have been set free from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness. 19 (I'm speaking with ordinary metaphors because of your limitations.) Once, you offered the parts of your body to be used as slaves to impurity and to lawless behavior that leads to still more lawless behavior. Now, you should present the parts of your body as slaves to righteousness, which makes your lives holy. 20 When you were slaves of sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What consequences did you get from doing things that you are now ashamed of? The outcome of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and become slaves to God, you have the consequence of a holy life, and the outcome is eternal life. 23 The wages that sin pays are death, but God's gift is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

Introduction

Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

*** Start Sermon Timer ***

Series Review

Are you busy all the time? Do you find yourself exhausted at the end of most days? Ever feel overwhelmed by the expectations and obligations in your life? The Bible offers relevant answers that have the power to change your life. Join us for a new worship series designed to help us do the things that God wants us to do today.

Today, we have been blessed.

Today, we have been set free.

Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

Opening

Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Split Loyalty Sports Fans

When I was in high school, my family lived in Salina. There are two public high schools - Salina Central and Salina South. We were rivals. I went to Salina Central, home of the Mustangs. Most people in town were either a fan of one school or the other. You were not a fan of both.

We see this in sports of all kinds. You are a Chiefs or a Broncos Fan.

Royals or Cardinals.

Shockers, Wildcats, Jayhawks or even Sooners.

It can be unusual for someone to switch loyalties from one to the other.

Transition

That is what the scripture focuses on today. The change in loyalty from sin to righteousness. The words that Paul uses are the change from being a slave to sin to a slave to God. Where do your loyalties lie?

Slave to God

What is God's will?

What is God's will for us? One of the places in which Jesus gives us the answer is when he responds to a question about which commandment is the greatest. Hear these words from Mark 12:29-31:

"Jesus replied, "The most important one is Israel, listen! Our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, You will love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these."¹

God's will for our lives is to live in perfect love of God and neighbor.

We are designed to be a disciple, a follower of Jesus Christ – a follower of the one who showed us his kind of love by laying down his life for us and the world.

Transition

When we seek to follow after Christ, to live in love of God and neighbor and to worship, grow, give serve and share our faith, we begin to experience a new life.

Experience of Living as a Slave to God

When we live as a slave to God, we begin to experience, what the author of Galatians describes as the fruit of the Spirit –

"Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."²

When writing to Timothy, the apostle Paul describes the experience of living as a slave to God as "[taking] hold of what is truly life."³

This is the goal of the Christian life.

This is what it means to be a slave to righteousness – a slave to God.

Transition

So, what does it mean to be a slave to sin?

¹ Mark 12:29-31, CEB.

² Galatians 5:22b-23a, CEB.

³ 1 Timothy 6:19, CEB.

Story: Wrong Goal in Basketball

I played three seasons of basketball in high school and I was not very good. I was the only junior that never suited up a varsity game, so my senior year I decided to go out for the winter musical and found a role in the Music Man.

However, when I was on the team, I played center. One of the rules of thumb for someone in this position is never dribble. If there is a turnover, get the ball to a guard who will take it up the floor.

Well, near the end of a close game, somehow I ended up with the ball around mid-court. I did not get the ball to a guard and instead started dribbling the ball toward the goal on my own. There was no one in the way and I started dribbling toward the goal. About the three point line, I realized that I should not be dribbling the ball up the court. What should I do?

The top half of my body thought it was a good idea to stop and pass, so I grabbed the ball. However, that message didn't get to my legs, so I kept running.

I traveled from about the three point line to the basket.

If I have gone this far, I should go ahead and shoot a layup.

Which I missed.

I knew I had messed up, yet it was not until I turned around and saw the rest of my team and the other team when I realized that not only had I started dribbling toward the goal, traveled and missed a layup – I had done all of this *at the wrong basket*.

I had missed the goal completely.

Slave to Sin

What is sin?

Sin is when we literally miss the goal which God has for our lives.

It is an act of rebellion against God.

We can sin by what we do – our behavior, choices and actions.

We can sin by what we don't do – doing nothing in the face of evil or injustice when we have the ability to make a difference. Or as described in James 4:17,

"It is a sin when someone knows the right thing to do and doesn't do it"⁴

⁴ James 4:17, CEB.

Experience of Living as a Slave to Sin

The reality is that sin is part of the human condition, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”⁵ We see it around us all the time.

- people are bullied
- lies are told to co-workers
- wives, husbands, sons and daughters treat each other terribly
- we lose our temper
- global poverty continues to be reality
- people are killed because of what they look like, do for a living or believe
- people are hated for their race or ethnicity

Living as a slave to sin, means living a life of darkness and uncertainty. The scripture passage for us today tells us, in Romans 7:21:

“What consequences did you get from doing things that you are now ashamed of? The outcome of those things is death.”⁶

The outcome is death. Clearly, it is not complete or physical death most of the time. Each of us knows what this is like. We know what it feels like when we have said the wrong thing, damaged a relationship, did not address a need about which we know we could have done something. This is part of our shared common experience as human beings.

So, if it is part of our life together and the consequences are so severe, how can we say today, “I am free from sin”?

Transition

Let me tell you another story about God’s response to sin. As you know, Jesus often tells parables or stories which teach us something that is true about God, about us and how God and humanity interact. Here is one of them.

God’s Response to Sin

The Lost Son, Older Brother and Running Father

This is the story of a man who had two sons. “The younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the inheritance.’”⁷ This would have been what he would have received after his father died. Essentially, the son is saying, “Dad, I wish you were dead.”

⁵ Romans 3:12, NIV.

⁶ Romans 6:21, CEB.

⁷ Luke 15:12, CEB.

He takes this money, travels to another state and blows it all on wild living - sex, drugs, and parties. He utterly enjoys himself, until one day he realizes that he is out of money. Completely.

“When he had used up his resources, a severe food shortage arose in that country and he began to be in need. He hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. He longed to eat his fill from what the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything.”⁸

Then, he remembers that even the slaves in his Father’s house were better off than he was right then. He sets off for home with a script in mind - “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son. Take me on as one of your hired hands.”⁹

“So he got up and went to his father. “While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion. His father ran to him, hugged him, and kissed him.”¹⁰ He throws a feast and a great party for this son that has returned.

His old brother complains to his father - “Look, I’ve served you all these years, and I never disobeyed your instruction. Yet you’ve never given me as much as a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours returned, after gobbling up your estate on prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.’

Then his father said, ‘Son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found.’”¹¹

This story paints a picture of God’s love, grace and forgiveness. The very same love and forgiveness that is available for you today.

Prevenient Grace - Before our Awareness

As United Methodist Christians, we believe that God is at work in the lives of people before they recognize it. God was working in the life of the son, even at the beginning of the story when he asks his father for his share of the estate.

God loves us even when we are sinners.

God offers us forgiveness, even though we don’t deserve it.

⁸ Luke 15:14-16, CEB.

⁹ Luke 15:18b-19, CEB.

¹⁰ Luke 15:20, CEB.

¹¹ Luke 15:29b-32, CEB.

Justifying - Opportunity for Decision

We have the same choice that Paul considers in the passage of scripture today. We can decide to live as slaves to God or a slave to sin. It is that moment of clarity for the son there with the pigs. Life doesn't have to be like this.

We confess our sins, receive forgiveness, trust in God and seek to follow Jesus. We are set free from the slavery of sin and are free to live as slaves to God. We are made right with God and begin to grow in love of God and neighbor.

Sanctifying - Growing in Faith

Then, we seek to follow after God all of our days. We grow to perfect love of God and neighbor with the spiritual practice to worship, grow, give, serve and share. When we use these spiritual tools, we come closer and closer to God and care more deeply for our neighbor.

Fully in the Light - Christian Perfection

By God's grace, it is possible for us to be delivered completely from slavery to sin and death and live completely as disciples of Jesus Christ. The amazing thing is that to live in this way, it takes people who know what it is like to live as slaves to sin. The only ones qualified are the ones who have experienced God's grace and forgiveness.

Conclusion - I am free from sin.

Good News

The good news is that Jesus Christ sets us free from sin to live a holy life today.

Call to Action

The opportunity to live a holy life and to receive God's forgiveness is here today
It is available today.
It is available for you and for me.
All we have to do is ask.

Invitation

It's a very simple thing to pray – I am sorry. Thank you. Please.

- Turning away from the things that we know are wrong, saying "I am sorry".
- Thanking Jesus for dying and being raised for us; putting our faith in him.
- And finally, 'Please come and fill me with your Spirit.' Sorry, thank you, please.

And I want to make it possible for you to pray that prayer. You don't have to pray it out loud or come forward or raise your hand. God can hear the prayers in our hearts.

You can be delivered completely from a life of one brought “out of darkness into God’s amazing light.”¹²

Today, it may be the very first time for you to pray in this way.

Today, it may not be the first time, but the first time in a long time.

Today, it may be the prayer you have prayed every day for a long time.

When we ask in prayer, we receive God’s forgiveness.

When we ask God, we can be free from sin today.

Will you pray with me?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, I’m sorry for the things in my life that have been wrong.

And if anything comes to mind, ask his forgiveness.

Today, I turn away from everything that I know is wrong.

Thank you that you died and rose again for me.

I trust you with my life.

Help me receive your forgiveness.

Please fill me with your Spirit and empower me to live a holy life.

Make me free from sin today.

Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

	8:30 AM	11:00 AM
Sermon Time		

¹² 1 Peter 2:9, CEB