

Slaves to Christ

Bible Study for Sunday 28/06/20

- ❖ The news this month has contained many references to slavery and to its legacy. Modern day slavery is also a growing problem. When you hear the word what comes into your mind?
- ❖ Now read this week's passage from Paul.

Romans 6:12-23

Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. ¹³No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, ¹⁸and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

²⁰When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- ❖ What is your reaction? What do you struggle with?

Jane Williams writes: 'If it makes us uncomfortable to think of being God's slaves, that is perhaps because we seldom admit how much we are enslaved to other things already. Even 'spirituality' can enslave. Only slavery to God is freedom.'

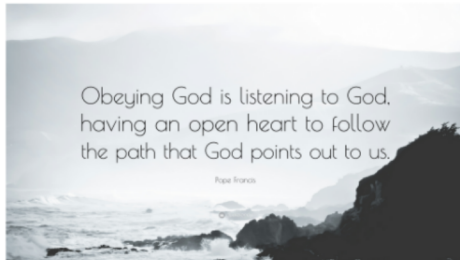
- ❖ Paul says; 'You are slaves of the one whom you obey.'
To what, other than God, are people enslaved in our times? Do you think they are aware of their 'slavery'?
- ❖ What desires, behaviour or attitudes do you think threaten to enslave you?
- ❖ What do you think it means to become 'obedient from the heart'?

Now read our Gospel: **Matthew 10:40-end**

⁴⁰“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

- ❖ The language here is not of slavery but it still shows a complete ‘possession’ of Jesus by his Father and of us by Jesus. We belong so entirely to him that whoever welcomes us welcomes him and welcomes the one who sent him.
How do you respond to this imagery and to this way of seeing ourselves..... and others?

Prayer: Take a few moments to offer to God the ideas you have struggled with this week and then ask him to show you how to become ‘obedient from the heart’.



You may like to use these:

Sunday’s Collect

Almighty God,
you have broken the tyranny of sin
and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts
whereby we call you Father:
give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,
that we and all creation may be brought
to the glorious liberty of the children of God;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen

R.S. Thomas, Mass for Hard Times (excerpt)

Because you are not there
When I turn, but are in the turning,
Gloria.

Because it is not I who look
but I who am being looked through,
Gloria.

Because the captive has found the liberty
that eluded him while he was free,
Gloria.