

**Titles of Christians (8)**  
**Slaves of Righteousness**  
**Romans 6:18**  
**Sermon by Pastor Sylvia Chan**

**Christians are slaves of righteousness**

We have studied 7 titles of Christians in the Bible, today we are going to study another title – this is the 8<sup>th</sup> title.

<sup>NASB</sup> **Romans 6:18** and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (Rom 6:18 NASB)

Do you feel uncomfortable with this verse? We have just been freed from sin, yet the next moment we become slaves of righteousness! We leave one type of slavery only to fall into another type of slavery. Does it mean that we never have freedom from slavery? What does it mean to be slaves of righteousness? Now let's look at the Bible to find the answers step by step.

**Slaves of righteousness are slaves of Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus Christ**

First of all, what does it mean to be slaves of righteousness?

<sup>NASB</sup> **Jeremiah 23:6** In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.' (Jer 23:6 NASB)

Here we have the word "LORD" written in all capital letters, meaning that "LORD" comes from the original Hebrew word "יהוה" (Yahweh), the proper name of the God of Israel. I will not go deep into the name Yahweh. If you want to study the name Yahweh deeper, you can go to the website [christiandc.org](http://christiandc.org) to read the book "The Only True God" by Pastor Eric Chang.

Here "The LORD (יהוה) our righteousness" shows that Yahweh God is the embodiment of righteousness; He is righteousness.

<sup>NASB</sup> **1 Corinthians 1:30** But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption (1Co 1:30 NASB)

## Slaves of Righteousness

This verse says specifically that Christ Jesus is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Sanctification means holiness. If the Lord is willing, we can study sanctification (holiness) in the near future.

These two passages, Jeremiah 23:6 and 1 Corinthians 1:30, clearly show that Yahweh God and our Lord Jesus Christ are our righteousness. Therefore slaves of righteousness are slaves of Yahweh God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **We were slaves of sin**

Before we came to know Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus Christ, we were slaves of sin.

<sup>NASB</sup> **John 8:34** Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.” (Joh 8:34 NASB)

Here the Lord Jesus says that everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin; when we commit sin, we become slaves of sin. All human beings have committed sin, therefore we were all slaves of sin, sin was our master.

Today in most countries (though not all countries) there are no more slaves officially, and we don't know exactly what the life of a slave is like. But at the time of the Lord Jesus, there were slaves all over the world, there were slaves in China, there were slaves throughout the Roman Empire, and there were slaves in many nations in Africa and Asia. A slave's life was controlled completely by his master. If the master didn't like a slave, he could just beat him up, torture him, or, in some countries, even put him to death.

A slave's life depended entirely on the master; if the master was an evil person, the slave would suffer a lot. But there were also some kind-hearted masters who treated their slaves very well. Some people would buy slaves to be their concubines, some would even buy slaves to be their adopted sons.

A slave could never get out of the control of the master, he belonged to his master the whole life. If the slave ran away, the master could send people to catch him and bring him back, and he would be punished severely. It was only when the slave died that he was finally free from his master.

According to John 8:34 we were all slaves of sin; if we want to be free from the control of sin, we likewise have to die. I don't mean die physically, but die spiritually, that's what apostle Paul says in Romans, that we have to die to sin. If you want to understand the process of how we are set free

from the control of sin, you can go to the [christiandc.org](http://christiandc.org) website to read the books “Totally Committed” and “Becoming a New Person” by Pastor Eric Chang. I will not repeat the whole discussion here.

### **We go from slaves of sin to become slaves of righteousness**

Some people may say, “That’s right! When we become Christians, we get out of the control of sin, and we have freedom. But how come we become slaves of righteousness?”

People in ancient times usually had to pay a certain amount of money to buy a slave. The amount of money depends on the health, the strength, the age, and the skills of the slave. If the new owner liked the slave, he would be willing to pay a higher price to buy the slave. In our case the Lord Jesus Christ has paid the highest price in the universe, redeeming us with his own precious blood.

<sup>NASB</sup> **1 Peter 1:18 – 19** knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup> but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. (1Pe 1:18-19 NASB)

Here Apostle Peter says that we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has never sinned, he is sinless, his blood is sinless; he uses his sinless blood to redeem us, therefore he is our new master, we are transferred from slaves of sin to slaves of righteousness.

### **There is no middle ground between slaves of righteousness and slaves of sin**

There is no middle ground between being slaves of sin and being slaves of righteousness! If you are not slaves of righteousness, then you are slaves of sin! But some people would say, “Slaves of righteousness are still slaves! I don’t want to be slaves of anyone at all, I want to be my own master!”

Brothers, sisters and friends, freedom does not mean that you can just do whatever you want, that is not freedom! If anyone thinks freedom means that he is free to do whatever he wants, he would end up losing all freedom, he may even lose his own life! He will certainly go into destruction. Even the freest countries in the world still have laws, the citizens of a free country still have to obey the law of that country. If they do things against the law, they would be put in jail and lose all freedom! On the contrary, if they obey the law, then they can continue to live a life of freedom.

<sup>NASB</sup> **1 John 5:19** We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power* of the evil one. (1Jo 5:19 NASB)

This passage says that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one, but we Christians are of God. That means we are not of the evil one, we are not under his power. Conversely, if anyone is not of God, then he is under the power of the evil one. There is no middle ground between slaves of God and slaves of sin.

If we are not slaves of righteousness, then we are slaves of sin. We have to choose between the two. One is to be slaves of righteousness, the other is to be slaves of sin; one is of God, the other is of the devil. No one can stand in the middle ground between slaves of righteousness and slaves of sin.

### **The big difference between the life of slaves of sin and the life of slaves of righteousness**

Some people may ask, “Is there a difference between the life of slaves of sin and the life of slaves of righteousness?” Yes, there is a big difference between the life of slaves of sin and the life of slaves of righteousness.

Many years ago I watched a movie or a documentary (I don't remember whether it was a movie or a documentary, that was a few decades ago when I was still living in Vietnam); this movie or documentary depicts the life of drug addicts. Among the drug addicts was a young student girl! She was from a middle class family, she went to a good school, but she was addicted to drugs! When she first started taking drugs, she bought the drugs with the pocket money her parents gave her; but soon she got addicted, and needed to take more and more drugs. Her pocket money was not enough, so she asked the drug dealers to let her take the drugs for free, promising that she will pay them back when she got more pocket money. The drug dealers were willing to let her take the drugs for free, but when she couldn't pay them back, they forced her to do illegal things such as selling drugs for them and pickpocketing. Finally they forced her to become a prostitute to earn money for them. If she didn't comply, they would stop providing drugs for her. She was in such pain and torment that she would just kneel before them to beg for drugs; she was willing to do anything for them just to get drugs.

That's the story of a slave of sin; the devil would use various cunning ways to deceive us. To tempt us to sin, he would lure us to indulge in more and more sins. Finally we lose all control, and would just do whatever the devil commands us to do just like that young girl, and we would perish both physically and spiritually.

But Yahweh God uses love and righteousness to draw us to Himself. God had been taking care of us even before we knew Him. He let us experience His loving kindness and holiness. He never forces us or tempts us to do anything. We ourselves have to make the decision of whether we follow

Him. When we are willing to commit our lives totally to Him, and get baptized, we ourselves decide the direction and purpose of our lives.

After we get baptized and became Christians, we become slaves of righteousness. But Yahweh God does not force us to follow Him, He still lets us choose the way we want to live. Whenever we need to make a decision for our lives, Yahweh God would point us to the right way, but He never forces us to choose His way. If we choose the way of God, our relationship with Him will become closer and closer. If we choose the way of the world, we will be farther and farther away from God, and at the end we might fall back into sin again.

<sup>NASB</sup> **John 15:14 – 15** “You are My friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.” (Joh 15:14-15 NASB)

Here the Lord Jesus says if we obey him, if we do what he commands us, then he would no longer call us slaves (even though we are truly his slaves because he redeemed us with his blood), but he would call us his friends. In all these years of walking with the Lord and serving him, he never treats me as a slave. When people in the world attack me and insult me, I would turn to my Lord for help; my Lord would always treat me with respect and dignity. (You can go to [christiandc.org](http://christiandc.org) to read my testimony “Goodness and Lovingkindness will Follow Me all the Days of My Life”.)

<sup>NIV</sup> **Romans 6:22 – 23** 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. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 6:22-23 NIV)

Here this passage points out the different outcomes for slaves of sin and slaves of righteousness. If you are slaves of God (which is the same as slaves of righteousness, since Yahweh God is the embodiment of righteousness), you will have holiness, and the result is eternal life. On the contrary, if right now you live as slaves of sin, you will face death. Please take notice that it is not talking about physical death on earth, because the death in v.23 is parallel to the eternal life in v.22. As eternal life is spiritual life in heaven, so the death is spiritual death, which means condemnation.

### **What should we do as slaves of righteousness?**

Since we are slaves of righteousness, what should we do in this world? What is our duty as slaves of righteousness?

**1. We present our bodies as instruments of righteousness to God**

<sup>NASB</sup> **Romans 6:13** and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. (Rom 6:13 NASB)

Here this passage says we have to become instruments of righteousness. If you don't want to be instruments of righteousness, you will be instruments of unrighteousness controlled by sin and used by Satan. Please remember there is no middle ground between slaves of righteousness and slaves of sin; if you are not slaves of righteousness, you will be slaves of sin.

If we want to be instruments of righteousness, what should we do?

**2. We are to be faithful in everything Yahweh God entrusts to us**

<sup>NASB</sup> **Luke 16:10** He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. (Luk 16:10 NASB)

This passage says he who is faithful in a little thing is also faithful in much. Here the unrighteous is contrasted with the faithful; that means the faithful are considered as righteous by God. Therefore if we want to be instruments of righteousness, we have to be faithful in everything Yahweh God entrusts to us.

<sup>NASB</sup> **Numbers 12:7** Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household (Num 12:7 NASB)

Here in this passage Yahweh God commended Moses for his faithfulness in the household of God. Faithfulness is a very important quality in a servant of God.

**3. We are willing to suffer for the Lord Jesus Christ**

<sup>NASB</sup> **John 15:19 – 20** “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. (Joh 15:19-20 NASB)

Here the Lord Jesus says that the people in the world will persecute us because they have persecuted him. We are his disciples, therefore they will also persecute us.

Are you willing and ready to suffer for the Lord Jesus Christ? If we are faithful to the Lord, we will certainly be persecuted by the world. I have been insulted again and again because I preach the teaching of the Lord faithfully, I refuse to compromise and water down the word of the Lord; people don't want to hear that, they think I am speaking against them, so they attack me and insult me. I take it as an honor to be persecuted for the Lord.

### **Conclusion**

Now let's sum up everything we have studied today. The Bible says:

- Christians are slaves of righteousness.
- We were slaves of sin before we came to know Yahweh God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We go from slaves of sin to become slaves of righteousness.
- There is no middle ground between slaves of sin and slaves of righteousness.
- On the contrary there is a big difference between slaves of sin and slaves of righteousness.
- As slaves of righteousness, we should present our bodies as instruments of righteousness to God, we are to be faithful in everything Yahweh God entrusts to us and we are to be willing to suffer for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brothers, sisters and friends, freedom does not mean that we can just do whatever we want, that is not freedom! If anyone thinks freedom means we are free to do whatever we want, he certainly will go into destruction, he will lose all freedom, he may even lose his own life! Even the free countries in the world still have laws; the citizens of a free country still have to obey the laws of that country. If they do things against the law, they would be put in jail and lose all freedom! If they obey the law, they can continue to live a life of freedom.