



Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford

Romans 5-8 - Sept. 30/Oct. 1, 2017 - Jeff Bucknam
Freed to Slavery - (Romans 6:15-23)

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

If you have a Bible, I want to invite you to open it to Romans chapter six. We're going to start looking at verse 15 in just a minute. Before we do that though, I want to show you a little video, mostly because I liked it. I came across it this week and it's a good segway into what I want to talk about in the next few minutes, so you can have a look at this: [video:

Young girl, Loren, says to Girl #2 "ok, just close your eyes and fall down". Girl #2 has her arms crossed in front of her and she closes her eyes.

Adult Male says "and Loren's going to catch you. It's called the trust fall."

Loren walks behind Girl #2 and holds her hands up to stop her from falling backwards.

Adult Male says "ok, trust fall. Ready, set, go". Girl B falls forward while Loren screeches in horror.] [laughter].

I think she was okay [laughter]. Sometimes you just misunderstand the rules right? It's an appropriate term, misunderstanding. Most of the problems you and I have in our life are a result of our misunderstanding. Most of our flat-on-our-face moments are because of our misunderstandings. In our marriage, in our theology, in our life in general, we misunderstand something and then we go with our misunderstanding and we live in light of the misunderstanding until maybe one moment later we come to a better understanding and we're like, "Okay. Ow, my face hurts." The Apostle Paul spent most of his time in the Scriptures actually writing letters to churches that misunderstood stuff. Whole books, in fact, are written to try to correct misunderstandings from people. He had his own critics and people who had heard what he had to say about Jesus and following him and those people had assumed things to be true that actually weren't true, so he has to, in many places, correct what they are saying. This is one of them: in Romans 6:15, he actually wants to correct some of his chief critics who call him what is known in theological circles as 'Antinomian' or anti-law. "You don't like God's law. You're preaching a gospel that's freeing everybody from obeying God and you're saying that everyone can just do whatever they want and be accepted by God and that's not true, Paul." And Paul's response is, "No, that's a misunderstanding."

When I was in seminary I went to an adult Sunday School class at the church I attended in Dallas, Texas. My wife and I went and they had a classroom full of about 20 or 30 twenty-somethings. We all got to know each other really well. One of the guys who was at my seminary was actually teaching on this passage on one particular morning and he said to the class, "Okay, before we start looking at this



passage, what I want you to do is I want all of you to answer this one question in your minds: are you slave or are you free? Okay, so now that you've got that in your mind, I want those of you who think you are slaves to go on this [indicating right] side of the room and I want those of you who think that you are free to go on this [indicating left] side of the room." Now, there were about 30 people or so and 28 of them all went to the other side of the room. Me and this other dude --my wife went on the free side and me and this other guy were like, "No, we're slaves." Now, I was writing a Master's thesis on this particular passage of Scripture and so, as I often am, I was right, in this occasion, right? [laughter]. It's understandable, though, why someone would think that they are free. I mean, that's all that Paul says in Romans 6:1-14. "You're free from sin. You're free. You're free. You should live as free people because you're free. Feel the freedom my free friends." Yeah, we're free, but if that's all you think of yourself as, you've misunderstood. So, Romans 6:15-23 is going to correct some of that misunderstanding. Here's the way that he's going to do this and kind of the outline that we're going to follow so you know where we are as we go through this passage. He starts with a question. The way that Paul is arguing in this section of the Scriptures is he has created this imaginary debate partner and every once in a while the debate partner will raise a question that Paul will then answer and there are implications to his answer. So those are our three steps:

1. The Question
2. The Answer
3. The Implications

First, the question. Second, the answer, which is a little bit involved, so I want to walk you through it. And then finally, the implications to the answer.

[The Question]

So here we go. Here's the question in verse 15 of Romans 6:

"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?"

Now, I told you a second ago that these questions are raised by this imaginary debater and they arise because of what Paul just said immediately prior to the question. They are natural questions that arise out of the discussion and so what did he say? Look at Romans 6:12-14, right? The three verses that precede the question:

"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. [Ready?] For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace."

That language of "under the law" and "under grace," means that under the governing power of the law. You are under the governing power of grace. You have, in essence, changed governments.



You've gone from Law-land and immigrated to Grace-land. Geez, that was a little bit...[laughter]. But, you see what I mean, right? There's a movement from one to the other and the rules that applied in Law-land do not apply in Grace-land. You're free from Law-land, you're free from the land where sin was your master and you now live in grace in Grace-land.

Some of you have moved internationally before. Maybe you just moved across the country or somehow cross-culturally you've gone from one place where certain rules applied, to another place where other rules apply. The first time that I ever really actually experienced that massively was when I moved to New Zealand. My wife and I, just the two of us, we took off and we had traveled around Europe and other places before, but this was going to be different because we were going to *live* there for, we didn't know how long. Totally go native there. We didn't know anyone like us. We didn't know other Americans, we didn't know other Canadians, we just only knew Kiwis. So we moved to Auckland, New Zealand and there were some things, immediately, that if you just even visit you'll notice big differences in rules there than there were here in North America. One of the big rule differences has to do with driving, right? They drive on the wrong side of the road, right? We're on the right side, right? So we're on the right side and their on the wrong side [laughter]. I tell them that before and they laughed harder that you did. [laughter] So you drive on the left side there, so when you first arrive it takes a lot of getting used to, you know? You constantly go to the wrong side of the car and you're getting in a thinking, "Where's the steering wheel? Oh, it's over there." And then you get out and your turn signal ends up being your windshield wipers going all the time and you look like an idiot driving down the road. Sometimes, because you're driving directly into traffic screaming at people around you, "Why are you all...? Oops, over here."

The rules for eating dinner there are different. We weren't prepared for that. By the way, dinner there is called tea. So you eat tea, okay? Tea is followed by supper. Let me explain. So, if somebody (a New Zealander) invites you to their house, you go a little early, before tea (which is dinner). You show up and usually you arrive and the ladies usually talk in the kitchen and the guys sit in a room called the lounge, where they sit on the couches and there's usually a T.V. on and it almost always has rugby on it. They don't talk to each other very much, but they go, "*grunt* yeah, yeah" until dinner (which is tea) and then you have this dinner and you eat it and after that you have dessert. After that you all go to the lounge and you sit down and there is usually an hour or two of just talking and the T.V. is still on, so the guys don't have to talk that much. They look around everybody else to watch the T.V. Then you have supper. After supper you can leave. If you leave before supper (which is just like a cookie or something)-- it's the signal that the evening is basically over now and you can go at any time. Now, when we first arrived there, we, of course, like good Americans, we ate the dinner (the tea) and we had the dessert and talked for a little bit and then we were like, "We're out of here." We'd be walking to the door and our hosts were like, "Oh, did we offend you? Are you okay? Are you offended in some way?" "No. I mean, I don't like mutton, but no" [laughter]. And then we realized after a while that, "Oh, okay, so there are these set rules that we don't have." I used to walk around and I used to ask for two of everything and I'd do it like that, right? [motioning with two fingers]. "I'd like two Big Macs, I'd like two..." "How many kids do you want?" "Two." This is flipping people off in New Zealand and I did it for a year to everybody I knew [laughter]. I'd be in churches doing this. "So what do you guys think



about this, you know?” [laughter]. It was ridiculous. Finally, somebody came to me and said, “You know, you probably should stop flipping everybody off” [laughter].

There are different rules when you transfer from one governance to another. This is what Paul is essentially saying: that you have abandoned the rules of Law-land and you are now part of Grace-land and in Grace-land, your righteous standing before God is found in who Jesus is and not you. In Law-land, you had to stand before God on your own merit, but in Grace-land it's on Jesus' merit. So listen, if you get to stand before God completely by the works of another, what is motivating you to do any works? What then? Should we continue in sin because we are not under law but under grace? If we went to Germany today and I gave you a car and you went to drive on the Autobahn where there are no speed laws, will you drive quickly or slowly? You know what you'll do, right? “No, I'm going to be really careful out here.” No! “Let's see what this baby does,” right? [laughter]. Because the removal of the law doesn't encourage careful obedience to the law. The removal of the law encourages, “Whatever, just do whatever.” “So look Paul, if you're arguing with everyone that Jesus fulfilled the law and he has fulfilled the law on behalf of everyone else, you removed it, essentially, from everyone. What are they going to do? Speed or drive carefully? They're going to speed. They're going to do whatever they want.” I had a friend in college and we were on the top of a hill and he just got his licence, right? He was a younger friend and he just got his licence and he drove down this hill. There was a stop sign at the bottom and I was like, “Dude, you've got to slow down, you've got to slow down” and he flew right through the stop sign. I was like, “What are you doing?” and he said, “Man, I'm free in Christ” [laughter]. “Really?” “Yeah man. I can do whatever.” Is that the case or is that a misunderstanding?

[The Answer]

Look, here's his answer in verse 15, again:

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? [No way!] 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?”

Now listen, when you and I re-read that and he says, “Don't you know that you're slaves to...” You and I are like, “No, we don't know that because we don't live in a world where slavery is common.” The world that Paul was writing to, though, 90% of the people he was writing to by most estimates were slaves at one point or another. Slavery was so common in the Roman world, so easy to fall into it. You just had to not pay your bills or just borrow some money and you end up getting enslaved to the people you owe the money to. You'd work it off of course, but lots and lots of people were in slavery, so when he's using this image, everyone was going, “Yeah, we totally get the principle of slavery that you are owned by the one that you submit to. You are owned by them.” But Paul is saying here, “Look, I want you to take that image and I want you to understand that there are only two slave owners in the world. You're either a slave of sin or you're a slave of God. That's it. You're either



committed to this side or that side. There is no Switzerland. You don't get to be just neutral. "I want to be an impartial observer." No! You are a slave to one or the other.

I use that phrase about Switzerland because about a year ago I heard it from a very unlikely source. Some of the pastors and I went to Texas to go to a conference and then after we went to the conference we drove north from San Antonio, where we were, up to Dallas. It's about a 3 or 4 hour drive and when we got to Dallas it was Friday night, okay? In early November. So, Friday night, Texas, early November...football, right? High School football. What you need to know about Texas High School football is that most High Schools have stadiums on their campuses that will hold 10 to 15 thousand people. Just the High School does. *Everybody* who is associated with the school goes to the Friday night game. That's what you're doing on Friday night under the lights. So we were like, "Sweet, we'll go." We found out, actually, that the game that we were going to go to was the State 6A Quarterfinal game, so that means it was the highest level of football in Texas. Some of the guys that we were watching on the field were going to play college and probably professional football in the next number of years. We went to this game, we didn't know a whole lot about the two teams that were playing, we found the stadium and we got there early and it's beautiful. I mean brick stadium that looked better than most stadiums that college teams play it. Big brick archways and they had this press box that was huge and overlooked the field. Hundreds of kids with their horns and batons and flags were out on the field before and during half time. When we first walked into the building we went through one of these archways and this guy comes up (you have to pay him 10 dollars) and says, "Which side are you going to be on?" "Uh, I don't know." "Well, you have to pick one." "Oh, okay, well we'll stay on the near side then because I don't want to walk all the way around." Okay, so four of us - me, three of our white pastors and Ezra, okay? Ezra is from Africa and so he is a black pastor, up here at our Mission campus. We go in and about 15 minutes later the crowd starts coming in we realize that we were on the side of the entirely black school. Everybody was black and me, a few white pastors, and Ezra, who was on the end going [nodding to everyone] [laughter]. He kept leaning forward and saying, "You betta watch yo mouth" to me, right? [laughter].

On the other side was a totally white school. When this guy sits down next to me, big man, he looks at me after a while, looks at the other white guys, nods at Ezra, then looks at the rest of us and he says, "So, where you from?" "Canada." "Which team are you cheering for?" "Well, we're kind of neutral." "Ain't no neutral" [laughter]. "This ain't Switzerland" [laughter]. "Whose side are you on?" [pauses to look around the stadium] "I, I'm on your side!" right? [laughter]. My voice was so hoarse by the end of the night because we were cheering for the team. It was great. Getting hugs and everybody inviting us over to their houses afterwards. This is the image, though, that Paul has to play. "There's no neutral. You are either on our side or you're on their side, so you can't just stand here and play Switzerland with us. There are no neutrals. You're either a slave of sin or your a slave of God." That's his answer. So just because you've been transferred from Law-land to Grace-land doesn't mean that you're not a slave. You're a slave to a better master.

Now, I want to stop here for a minute. We're going to get into the rest of his answer in just a second, but I want to just pause and make a little bit of application. You do know that if you go and talk to somebody who is not a believer-- or if you're not a believer here yourself today, you don't follow Christ



(and you're here and it's great having you here), I do want to challenge your thinking a little bit. If you go and talk to somebody who is not a believer and you say to them, "Listen, here's what Christianity is all about, you repent and turn away from your former manner of life and you follow Jesus, who has delivered for you eternal life and has offered that to you for free." If you say that to them, what most people who are unbelievers are going to hear is, "Okay, what you're saying to me is that I should give up my free position, uncommitted position, where I get to live however I like to live that fulfills me, and I should somehow submit to the authority of another (in this case, Jesus) to follow him for the rest of my days. Why on earth would I give up *freedom* for slavery?" What Paul is saying, and if he's right, (we believe him to be right, right? He is the representative of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking these words to us), what he's saying is, "Ain't no free." You might think that you're free, but that is a lie of the Devil. The Devil wants to convince you, oh unbeliever, that you are free from being a prisoner or a slave of anything, and yet you are a prisoner to sin, doing its bidding every time it calls. You cannot get out from under it. You live in Law-land and it is a despicable government, killing you.

Doug Moo, one of the commentators on this passage actually said it really well. He said,

"One is never 'free' from a master, and those non-Christians who think that they are 'free' are under an illusion created and sustained by Satan. The choice with which people are faced is not, 'Should I retain my freedom or give it up and submit to God?' but 'Should I serve sin or should I serve God?'"

Do you remember Gollum in Lord of the Rings? <Gollum's voice>"The fat one knows," right? "Smeagol, count it precious."</Gollum's voice> You're watching this movie and Gollum, he is such a memorable character. What does he want out of life? One thing. He is driven. His passions are attached to one thing: "The precious." The ring. "I have to have the ring. I will only be happy if I ever get the ring, if I touch it. I'll organize my entire life to make my friends with one goal of getting that ring." You're watching that movie and you're sitting next to me and I say to you half way through, "See this Gollum guy?" "Yeah." "Think he's free?" No! He's a slave to his passions. When J.R.R Tolkien writes this, that's what he's saying. He's saying, "Look, everyone is apart from Christ. Don't make the mistake of thinking that you're free. No, you're a slave to your passions." The question you have to ask is: which master is better? You're passions, sin leading to death, or God who gives you eternal life? Which is better?

This passage, though, is actually aimed at Christians, so I want to move away from that. He wants to spell this out for the Roman Christians a little bit more, so he goes at it in verse 17 as he continues his answer. He says,

"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 ['I'm not endorsing slavery here.' Paul is saying, 'Look, I'm just using it as an image, as a metaphor to show you what it's like. So don't misunderstand me and think that I'm like a big slave guy']. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to



impurity and ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.”

Be who you are. You're free from Law-land, you live in Grace-land, so be a citizen of Grace-land. There's lots of different images that might help here, but I'll give you one. Do you know who Cristiano Ronaldo is? He's the soccer player for Real Madrid. He likes to score goals and take his shirt off and flex, okay? He's probably one of the most well known soccer players all around the world and he gets paid more than most of them. He's a phenomenal player. He's also really, really rich and he's kind of a preening guy. He likes to show off. So this last week he went out and purchased a 2.9 million dollar Bugatti Chiron, okay? This is a car. He drove this car right in front of a reporter with his little kid in the front seat just to show everybody the car. It has electric windows, so he put the electric window down and he was just looking out and waving at everyone. It was all over the news. 2.9 million dollars. This car goes from 0-100 km an hour in 2.3 seconds. I think I could do it a little faster, right? [laughter]. So, one of the greatest cars in the world. I want you to imagine that I am going to buy you this car, okay? I'm going to sell the church and I'm going to buy it so that you can have this car [laughter], right? I might go to jail, but you're worth it. I buy this car for you, I bring you the keys, and you're like, "Thank you so much." You drive it home. Now at home is your other car, which is a Pontiac Sunfire, and you've had that for a lot of years, okay? And sometimes you tell your friends it's been good to you, but you've been lying all along. It has not been good to you because it's a Pontiac, okay? [laughter]. It breaks down all the time. You keep it in the garage so your neighbours don't think you're that cheap, but when you bring the Bugatti home, you're thinking, "Do I keep this out on the street? Probably not," so you put it in the garage and you bring the Sunfire out, you know, risking everyone's opinion that you're now white trash. You put that right in front of your house. There it is. You go inside and you know those little hooks by the door? You put your Bugatti key and the sunfire key right next to each other. The next morning you wake up early, a little excited, you go downstairs, you grab the keys, you walk out to the garage and you look at that Bugatti and you walk right by it and drive that Sunfire. "What are you doing? What kind of crazy nut owns a Bugatti and drives a Sunfire? What's true about you, is that you're a Bugatti owner. You used to be a Sunfire owner. You used to be a driver of the Sunfire, but now you're a Bugatti owner who can drive the Bugatti. Why wouldn't you drive the Bugatti?" This is basically Paul's point here. "Do you not know who you are?" Listen to the language he uses. Again, verse 18:

“You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness...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.”

“Don't you know who actually are?” He does this all over the place, by the way. I can show you so many passages where this is Paul's main emphasis with people who have low level Christian living. Like, if you just keep on sinning and keep on sinning and keep on giving in, Paul is just going to come, if he could sit you in a counselling room, he'd say, “Man, you've just got to be who you are.”
Ephesians 5:8:

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.”



You once drove the Sunfire, but now you're a Bugatti owner. Drive the Bugatti. You once lived in Law-land, now you live in Grace-land. Be a citizen of Grace-land. Be who you are. He finishes the answer here, okay? Verse 20:

"When you were slaves to sin [so he's going to start doing a little comparing here, right? He wants to motivate you through comparison. 'When you were slaves to sin,' so let's talk about Law-land, let's talk about your Sunfire. 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? [And you look back and you remember all the things that brought great shame on you, the actions that you do. What was the benefit?] Those things result in death [That's what life in Law-land looked like]! 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 Christ Jesus our Lord."

Do you remember, some of us, when we were younger, actually had to watch T.V. that we couldn't fast-forward, so you had to watch the commercials? When I was a kid, they didn't even have a mute button for a while. You had to get up and turn it down. I'm not going to do that because it's a lot of energy, so I'm sitting on my couch watching the commercials. One of the kinds of commercials, or kinds of commercials, that often came on were the ones where, "Okay, here's your bathtub. Look how disgusting it is." right? "You have not washed it in years and none of this is going to come off. Do you believe that all of this came off of your body? Ew. But if you use our Super Bubble Special, you can just spray it on there and this is what it looks like after." Then they'd have this screen that showed before (ew) and after (with the little sparkling star in the corner). "Your clothes looked like this after you soil them horribly, but then you used our laundry detergent and they look like this! Look, the side by side comparison." "Your house looks like this and then 'move that bus' and now it looks like this! It's amazing!" It's all a motivation technique, right? When I put them side by side you should be able to see the different between these two and you should want the 'now' as opposed to the 'once'. This is Paul's approach here. Again, I want to read the verses to you. He's focusing on the benefits of living in Law-land and Grace-land. Put them side by side. So, verse 20:

"When you were you were slaves from 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! [That's the groddy bathtub. That's the old life] 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 [which one do you want? Because you have to serve one of these two slave masters, so which one do you think is better?]. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I would probably prefer the master who gives gifts like that. It's all about motivation. So look, here's some implications. That's his answer, right? His answer ultimately is: should you continue to sin because you're not under law but under grace? You're a slave still, but your master is way better, so you should live like somebody in Grace-land.



[The Implications]

Here's some implications. I think there implicated, they're understood in the passage. Two of them. Number one: If it's not clear yet, you don't want to be a slave to sin. It's a really rotten ruler and ultimately leads to your eternal condemnation. It's killing you now and will lead you there. But you know, what's interesting about this passage is Paul actually outlines how you can get out of that condition and into Grace-land. Maybe you didn't notice it. I'll go back to verse 17:

“But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, [listen to how he describes their conversion] you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.”

I've got to be honest, I've never described my conversion in that way. That's like really wordy. “How did you come to faith in Christ?” “Uh, I don't know. A guy presented the gospel to me and I believed.” But Paul outlines it as, “No, you've come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.” So, he's doing it on purpose that way. He wants to say, “Listen, there are certain aspects to this immigration process when you leave Law-land and Grace-land. There is a certain kind of thing that happens when you convert.” “What things?” “Well, one: you have to embrace a pattern of teaching.” Isn't that what it says? “You have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching.” That means that there is a certain kind of thing that you have to believe. A certain kind of message. Now, I say this because I have been to lots and lots of churches and I've listened to lots and lots of preachers who these days say to people, “Listen, do you want to come to Jesus? Do you have some stress? Do you? Do you need to know your divine destiny? If you just pray this prayer, your stress levels will go way down and you'll know your divine destiny. You'll have purpose for your life. I want you to close your eyes, bow your heads, and everybody who prayed that prayer come forward. Isn't it great? All these people believe and follow Jesus now and a minute ago they didn't.” Do they? Have they come to believe a pattern of teaching? Well yeah. Is it *the* teaching? Is it *the* gospel? Those things might be good news, right? Reduced stress sounds like good news to me, but is it *the* good news? No. No it's not. *The* good news is one: you are a sinner, two: your sin is going to end in your eternal death, but number three: the good news is that Jesus Christ paid that penalty for you so that you, by faith and repentance, can live in fullness of life for ever and ever. That's the pattern of teaching that you say, “No, I agree with that.” It's at that moment that we say, “You're a Christian.”

That's not the only thing he says about this pattern of teaching. Notice he says, “You have come to obey it from your heart.” I remember when I was a Youth Pastor we had one of these meetings on a Saturday night. We took a whole bunch of kids to Central Washington State where they had a thing called Teen Jamboree, because that's what you used to call stuff like that in the 90s, right? “It's a Jamboree,” and everybody would go and.. It wouldn't have worked now. But, Saturday night, 2000 kids in the auditorium and the preacher would say, “Okay, come down...” and in many cases would explain the gospel message, would have a sound pattern of teaching, and people would come forward. So many people came forward from our church. What was interesting though, was a week or two after you'd see some of these kids around town and we hadn't seen them for a while since they



made that commitment. You'd talk to them afterwards to do some follow up, but then there was a period of time you didn't see them, so you'd go up and say to them, "How's it going? You doing okay?" "Well, ya." "Well I haven't seen you around and stuff. What happened on that particular night?" "Uh, I was just in the moment, man, but I'll tell you what I'm happy about. I'm happy that when I stand before God, you know, he's going to forgive me because I prayed that prayer." Okay, so I'm just going to ask you. Is that from the heart? Is that obeying from the heart the pattern of teaching? See, here's the thing: you have to actually want what Jesus is offering you. It's not just some perfunctory prayer that gives you a little gift certificate. No. It's to obey from the heart the pattern of teaching.

That language of *obey*, right? That's the third piece. You embrace a pattern of teaching, you embrace it from the heart, and you obey it. See, when I was in New Zealand it was funny, because you go and live there and see, living in a place is different than visiting. Some Americans would come and they would visit from time to time and they would stay at some of our friend's houses and our friends would call us up, "Come over, we've got Americans here. You've got to see this." I'm not kidding, one time we got invited over and they had some Texans in there and <Texan accent> they had this lady and she had this big old polkadot dress and her hair was huge and she would just talk to everybody, "Do you have any ranch dressing?" </Texan accent> [laughter]. So, you'd sit there and it's like "whoa" and our kiwi friends would sit and nod and every once and awhile they would get up and say, "I just need to go to the kitchen for a minute" and they would walk behind these people on the couch who were facing us and go [gesture with big eyes]. [laughter] After they left, my friend said to me, "You know, you're not very American" and I'm like, "Well, that's not actually true. What you're seeing is the difference between someone who has had to acclimate to the new culture and has invested themselves completely to obeying the new government (the new cultural rules) and somebody who is just kind of coming in and getting a t-shirt. Following Jesus is having a new master. It is not getting the t-shirt. You obey from the heart a pattern of teaching. *That's* what it means to convert.

I said that there were two implication. Here's my last one. I said that you don't want to be a slave of sin, but be a slave of God. Isn't that his main point here? "Drive the Bugatti". I've used this illustration before, but I love this story and it really does hopefully help give us a picture to what I think he's after here. I was discipled by a very large black man who had a split level home and two very large dogs. They were rottweilers - Baron and Paris. When we had our Bible studies in the basement, so you go into the home and you go down the stairs through a door and there is this basement area and there was a sliding glass door at the back. You go into this basement area for the Bible study and Hutch (the guy who was my mentor) never let either of these dogs in the room with us at the same time for fear that they might eat us [laughter]. We used to laugh at that and he would be like, 'No, I'm actually kind of serious. They are hunting dogs and I really am freaked out that they probably are going to bite you.'" Okay, the only times that he ever let them in is when he had a leash on them and they would sit at his feet and he would put his hand on their heads while they scanned the room at each one of us deciding, "Hmmm, which one is tastiest?" right? One day I showed up at his house and the front door was ajar so I opened the door and said, "Hutch, you here?" No answer, but I heard something downstairs so I walked downstairs, opened the door into the basement and saw the back sliding door was open and through the window I could see Hutch was in the backyard so I started walking in. Four, five, six, seven steps, about halfway to the door and as soon as I got to the door, I got around this little



couch, I saw two heads peek through that door, Paris and Baron, like velociraptors [laughter]. I froze and they froze and then Baron started going, [growling]. I turned and I started to go from 0-60 as fast as I could to get back to this door. As soon as I turned, I heard both of those dog's, their chains jingle, right? One of them I heard jumping on the back of the couch to come over the top of it, which was the shortcut to get to me, right? I'm running towards the door and I think it was Baron, he's right on my tail. Have you ever been in a situation where someone is chasing you and you feel their breath behind you? As soon as he's there I hear, [growling]. "Baron, down!" I hear Hutch yell from the door. This dog, I'm not kidding, in mid-air, stopped, slid right next to me and looked at me [panting] [laughter]. So, I clean myself up, right? [laughter] I said to Hutch, "I'm so glad you're here" and he said, "It's good to see it when they obey, yeah?" What a great picture, though, of what it means to have a master. You do know that God is the kind of master that you want. He promises to seek your best for all your days and gives you eternal life as a gift. Why wouldn't you live in that land? Why wouldn't you drive that car? Be who you are. Let me pray,

Father I'm thankful for your grace and for your Word. I ask, Father, that you would use it to bless us and to grow us in grace as you are doing. We pray it now in Jesus' name, Amen.