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What Sin Does: Enslaves

**Scripture Reading:** Romans 6:20-23

1. Introduction
	1. Concentrating on sin
		1. Entering into Lenten season
		2. Concentrating on sin over next several weeks…
			1. To look into our own hearts and our own sinfulness
			2. To fix our eyes on Jesus, the Savior of the world
	2. Context of Romans 6
		1. John Piper’s summary: “The reality of justification by faith does not produce Christians who are [indifferent] about the reality of sin in their own lives”
	3. Context of Romans 6:19-23
		1. We see that our problem is not one of guilt, where we only need to be forgiven, but one of *slavery*, where we can’t help but sin because we find it more appealing than righteousness
		2. If you consider yourself justified, but that isn’t followed by sanctification, you are headed straight towards hell
	4. Question: How are we enslaved to sin, and how are we freed from it?
	5. Three main points: 1) Slaves to Sin, 2) Liberation from Sin, 3) Eternal Destination
2. Slaves to Sin
	1. No one is exempt from sin
		1. Scripture tells us everyone is a sinner
			1. *For when* you *were slaves of sin*…
		2. Evidence: More often than not we know what we should do but we still don’t do it (e.g. lying, murdering, cheating, stealing, etc.)
	2. Sin enslaves and rules over you
		1. Sin is not merely an action, but it’s a *power* that takes hold of us[[1]](#footnote-1)
		2. The action of sin is desiring and loving other things more than we love God
		3. However, by that action you simultaneously invite sin into your heart, whereby you are ruled by it
			1. In effect, you are *free in regard to righteousness*
	3. Sin corrupts your nature
		1. Your very nature is *corrupted* [[2]](#footnote-2)
		2. Sin takes over every inch of your being – your heart, mind, and will
		3. You love things you shouldn’t, you think about things in ways you shouldn’t, and you desire for things you shouldn’t
		4. We become willful slaves
			1. You are a slave to sin, which means you do it *willingly*
				1. Paul never talks about slavery as doing something against your will, because your will is enslaved
				2. Like an addiction
			2. You don’t know you are a slave, because initially you get to exercise your will, convincing you that you are free, but try and stop and you’ll see that you are a slave, because you can’t – denying this means you haven’t fought against sin, or at least not hard enough
	4. Slavery to Sin Leads to Death
		1. Anything done apart from faith in Christ is sin (Romans 14:23)
		2. If you live to sin, then you are headed towards eternal death
3. Liberation from Sin
	1. How do we become free from sin?
		1. Solely by God’s intervention
			1. *But now that you have been set free from sin…*
		2. You cannot free yourself
			1. Because you didn’t know you were even a slave to begin with
			2. Because you are shackled in chains too strong for you to break by your own strength
		3. God frees you from your chains in Christ, like he did through Moses with the Israelites in Egypt
	2. What *is* this liberation?
		1. This liberation is justification by faith in Christ, in believing what he has done for us, to be made righteous before God
			1. Liberation is God capturing our hearts and our imaginations with something far more beautiful than the things we previously desired
			2. Liberation is experiencing the beauty of the glory of Christ, whereby we now can’t help but to worship him and thank him for what he’s done
		2. However, liberation is also the *sanctification* that now proceeds your status of being justified in Christ
			1. Christ has conquered sin and dominion, and so it no longer rules over you (Romans 6:14)
			2. Yet sin still resides within you, it wars within your body (Romans 7:23)
			3. So, on this side of eternity you are not completely free from sin, though, again, those in Christ are no longer ruled by it
4. Eternal Destination
	1. Slaves to God and righteousness
		1. Being enslaved to God is being justified in Christ and being ruled by his righteousness
	2. Sanctification
		1. The fruit of that freedom is that it leads us not to perfection but to sanctification
			1. In other words, justification propels us towards righteousness and holiness, which is the process of sanctification
		2. There is an element of human responsibility, one made possible only by God in Christ
			1. *Now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification*
	3. Justification
		1. It is not enough to say that you have faith, and are therefore justified; true justification leads to an outward life of repentance
		2. You can say no to sin and fight against it, because Christ frees you from its power and addiction, empowering you through his Holy Spirit
	4. Eternal Life
		1. There is nothing less at stake than eternal life
		2. Eternal life is the final end and destination for those who continually turn from sin and live in righteousness
		3. Till then we fight and wage war against sin, now having the power to do so because it is Christ strengthening us every step of the way
		4. This is why Paul says to his disciple, Timothy: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”
1. See David M. Choi, “The Doctrine of Sin,” *Logos* (Spring 2017): 12. Logos is Yale’s undergraduate Christian journal. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Saint Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. John Behr(New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2011), 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)