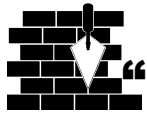


THE SERVANT - “Have I Been Set Free, Or ‘Turned Loose’?”



“Building Blocks”

1. **(Intro Scriptures-Rom 6)** This passage is a profound composite of much of what we have been looking at all year. Paul refers repeatedly to an old a new way of life, to righteousness and unrighteousness, to salvation as a completed event *and* as a continuous process, to sanctification in this life and eternal life in the next life. He also spells out in no uncertain terms that we must serve someone or something. He speaks of the Christian as someone who has exchanged his servitude to sin and self for servitude to God. If in fact we must serve someone, who *wouldn't* want to serve God?
2. **(Q3-Jn 12)** The words, “say” and “speak” in verse 49 most likely refer to the *content* and the *manner* in which that content is delivered. In other words, Jesus is talking here about *what* He says, and *how* He says it.

Jesus’ repeated emphasis on “saying” what the Father instructed Him seems odd to us. But for the Jew, anyone claiming to represent God has to have some basis of “authority” whenever they spoke for Yahweh. This idea is very obvious in both the Pharisees’ continual demand for Jesus to tell them “on what authority” He was saying the things He said (cf. Matt 21:23,24,27), as well as the statement made by Jesus’ listeners when he finished the Sermon on the Mount, that He “taught as one who had authority, not like their scribes” (cf. Matt 7:29).
3. **(Q4-Luke)** Jesus describes what we could rightly call “holy leadership” here. “Holy” means distinct or set apart, especially in regard to the surrounding culture. This servant style of leadership is “holy” because it is so radically distinct from the way kings and leaders acted in Jesus’ day. (Things have not changed in our day either!)
4. **(Q6b)** This question in the chapter is crucial. Their answers will reveal whether or not they understand the big picture: namely that we have the option of choosing *whom* we will serve, but not *whether* we will serve someone or something.
5. **(Q11)** Peter’s use of words is very instructive. The Greek word translated “overcome” (NAS, ESV) or “master” (NIV) literally means “*to make someone/something less or inferior.*” This is a profound concept. believers (or those who claim to be) who use the argument of “Christian liberty” to excuse sin are not only in bondage to that sin, but they are *reduced* as people in the process.

Satan hates the Imago Dei and constantly seeks to deface it. We see evidence of this in every life he touches, from demoniacs to paralytics to Pharisees.
6. **(Q12-Ps 19)** The Hebrew word translated “presumptuous” occurs 13x in our Old Testaments. In 12 cases, it is clearly referring to pride or arrogance (cf. Prov 21:24). These sins are *not* “hidden” sins that we are unaware of, as some think. They are willful, deliberate choices driven by the notion, “*I don't care what anyone else says...*”



“Stumbling Stones”

1. **(Q1)** We sometimes define “freedom” as the ability to make choices, but also want *control* over the consequences of those choices. That is *more* that freedom; it is power. Choices always set in motion the Law of Cause and Effect. Each individual choice always has consequences, but because of cause and effect, those consequences are inseparably linked to the choice itself. To eliminate the consequences would require eliminating the choice. That is, it would mean never setting into

motion that Law of Cause and Effect in the first place. It is impossible to be “free” to choose” *and* to be “free” to control the outcome of our choices.

2. **(Q4-Philippians 2)** This passage is often called the “kenosis” passage because the Greek word for “emptied” (vs. 7) is “kenaō.” But, the question remains, just *what* did Jesus “empty” Himself of? It was *not* His deity. He continued to *be* God, even in the flesh. A helpful insight is in the word, “grasped.” It means to “cling to,” *not* “to reach for,” Jesus voluntarily laid down His right to act independently as God. He submitted His will to that of the Father—even unto death! *THIS* is the “mind of Christ” that we are supposed to embrace.
3. **(Q7-Gal 5)** Paul makes it very clear that Christian “liberty” can become an excuse for “the flesh.” In light of all the other Scriptures we’ve examined, this abuse must be understood as me doing what I want rather than what the Father wants, *and* asserting that I am “free in Christ” to do such and such. In short, this perspective asserts that Jesus was totally submitted and obedient to the Father *so that I don’t have to!* Nothing could be further from the Truth and the heart of God. Jesus was a substitute for my sin *so that* I could be obedient to God, not so that I wouldn’t have to!
4. **(Q57-1 Pet 2)** Peter lays out two options for Christian “freedom”: one is to it to “serve God,” the other is as an excuse for sin. And sin here must be understood as disregard for the will of God. In short, it is doing what I want under the guise of God’s endorsement via “grace.”



“Going Deeper”

1. **(Q3-John 8)** What evidence is there in *your life* that you “take your orders from God?” Give examples.
2. **(Q5b)** Was this startling to you? Explain
3. **(Q5b)** What are the unavoidable implications from the truths in Question 5a?