

**Episode:** Other Letters Series No. 21

**Narrator:** Onesimus

**Primary Scriptures:** Romans 6, Colossians 4:9, Philemon

**Story Summary:** Everyone is a slave to sin or to righteousness

**Location:** Israel

**Time:** circa 50 AD

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Romans 6:16-18

In Romans 6:16, Paul makes one of the most important observations in his letters. He writes, “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.”

The best choice is to be a slave to obedience to God. This results in righteousness and life.

The alternative is choosing to obey anything else and become a slave to sin. These sinful things that come to possess you might be such things as addiction, pleasure, entertainment, sinful behaviors or beliefs, or self-centeredness.

In modern times it’s hard to understand the stark nature of this choice. All of society is geared to convince you that everything revolves around you, your pleasure, and your desires. Sin and self-centeredness are put forth as admirable qualities...qualities that give you freedom and a fulfilling life. Since the modern world is relatively peaceful and affluent, it is tempting to accept what the world offers.

In contrast, the Bible says that slavery to sin leads to death! It’s a constant struggle for anybody to remember that their natural state is living around the rotting, stinking smell of death. It’s hard to recognize that the perfumes of the distractions of the world are often just covering up the smell of sin and death.

A better understanding of this situation is important to having a better appreciation for the price Jesus paid to deliver people from their sins. It’s not a matter of whether you are a relatively good or bad person, it’s a matter that everyone is rotting because they are dying from their sinful choices. The only way to be delivered from this awful condition is for Jesus to have paid the price through his death on the cross, and for people to accept him as their savior.

Lazarus was a close friend of Jesus. After he had been dead for four days, Jesus arrived to comfort his sisters and to do an incredible miracle. Jesus arrived at the cave where Lazarus was buried and ordered the stone in front of it to be removed. Martha’s immediate response was, “Lord by this time he stinks for he has been dead four days.”

Jesus completely removed the stink of death from Lazarus by raising him from the dead to life. He does the same thing for anybody who follows him.