

## Jesus Christ is our Freedom from Sin

Today, I would like to talk about Jesus Christ as our freedom from sin. Let me start this off with a scenario.

Has anyone here experienced living in a house where nobody did any cleaning? First year undergrad maybe? How will the house look as time passes? Within the first couple days, the dishes pile up, the garbage gets a bit full. After a week, maybe something will start to smell. If you have tiles or hardwood floor, you'll see clumps of dust and hair; it might be a bit stained here and there. Carpets will look ok, but you don't even want to know what goes on down there. How long do you suppose it will take before you have extra rodent and insect guests?

I hope nobody thinks the house will clean itself up. This is similar to many things around us. When something turns bad, it goes from bad to worse, from isolated to widespread. I would even go as far as saying this is a general rule. In the physical world, we see rust, decomposition, and aging of inanimate and living things alike. Unless there is outside intervention, things generally fall apart. There is this pattern of decay around us, but does this pattern apply to us?

We can see this easily on the physical side of things. Imagine for a moment what a physically perfect human would be like – perfect in appearance, perfect in physique, perfect in mental capacities. Some of you may be like this now, or at least very close to this state, but unfortunately, we all contain tiny physical flaws which might not be so bothersome now, but with time, these flaws will become quite severe. As we continue to age, we will deteriorate like everything else around us, and then death.

The Bible tells us that this pervasive pattern of decay applies to our spiritual lives as well. Now imagine human being that is spiritually perfect – designed the way God intended; always kind to others, never selfish, always willing to sacrifice for others, always telling the truth – in short, always living according to God's law and never according to selfish desires.

This perfection isn't just something nice to have, but a standard set by God for us. When we fall short of this standard, this is what the Bible calls sin. Unfortunately, just like in the physical world, our flaws don't remain the same with time – they get worse. Sin leads to more sin, and then to greater sins. Worse than that, sin becomes so dominant that, like a cancer, we can no longer control it. Eventually, it controls us, and we become slaves to it. Sin is a terminal illness that eventually leads to spiritual death.

This is what the Bible says:

(Ezekiel 18:4)

“The soul who sins is the one who will die.”

You may argue, “We’re not slaves to sin. We are in control of our own actions.” But are you certain there is evidence of complete control? How many of us here made New Year’s resolutions? How many of these were kept? Why do we have to make them in the first place? What about our day to day lives? We have some idea of what’s best for us and what’s best for others. And yet, why do we find it so hard to do these things all the time? Why don’t we do the things we should to do, and why do we do the things we shouldn’t?

The Bible has this to say:

(John 8: 34b)

“Everyone who sins is a slave to sin.”

A slave! This is serious – it means that we are helpless. It doesn’t matter how hard we struggle, we can’t be free because sin has become our master. We are not in control. Sin is.

If we are unable to save ourselves from slavery to sin and from spiritual death, what can we do? The situation seems hopeless.

However, the Bible recorded one man, and only one man, who was able to break the pattern of sin. This man lived a flawless life – everything he did, every thought he had, was perfect before God. This man was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Bible tells us that (Heb 1:3) “the Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being.”

Because Jesus never sinned, he was never a slave to sin. God’s law, which says, “the soul who sins will die”, did not apply to Jesus because he never sinned. Nevertheless, God put him to death, not for his own sins, but for the sins of the whole world.

(1 John 2:2) However, because Jesus himself was without sin, God vindicated him by raising him from the dead. He “exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.” (Philippians 2:9).

How does this help us? God has given us the opportunity to be joined to Jesus Christ, to participate in his death, his victory over sin, and his resurrection.

When we choose to be joined to Christ, we die with him. Our sins are paid for, and they no longer have mastery over us. “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.” (Romans 6: 6-7)

We are no longer slaves, but free. No longer do we need to fear the penalty of sin, or the penalty of death, because these have been paid for in full by Christ. We have complete freedom to do whatever we want. But this is only the first part of freedom, freedom from the penalty of sin. What about the power of sin? With the resurrection of Christ, we get a new life, a life that is permanently connected to the source of all life. God’s own Holy

Spirit dwells within every believer, transforming our hearts and minds from within so that sin longer has power over us.

This is how the Bible contrasts between the old life and the new life:

(Romans 8: 5-6)

“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace”

The Christian with the Holy Spirit is truly free. He can do whatever he wants, because what he wants is truly good and brings him closer to God.

This is true freedom; freedom from both the penalty of sin, and the power of sin. A Christian life may only seem to be a life of rules and restrictions, but it isn't. It is a life of freedom, doing whatever you want, and wanting only what is good for you. Isn't this what heaven should be like? A place where you do whatever you want to do, but where everything you do is good. There is no slavery to sin in heaven.

Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:34-36) Do you want this freedom? Freedom from slavery to sin? This is the promise of Jesus Christ, as the Bible records him saying, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

If we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we will indeed be free.