

Freedom In Christ

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Galatians 4:7, 5:13, 5:1

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In our sinfulness we often believe freedom to be a thing that we deserve. God's word teaches us that freedom is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.

Galatians 4:7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The Old Testament paints us a beautiful picture of what freedom in Christ means in its description of the year of Jubilee.

Every year on the 10th day of the 7th month, the Hebrews were to celebrate the day of atonement. The blood of the lamb was poured over the mercy seat to make atonement for the sins of the people. Every 49th year as the blood was poured over the altar the horns of Jubilee would sound throughout the land and the year of Jubilee would begin. Every slave was set free. Every debt was cancelled. If any had sold their land and the homes, it was returned to them. All the people were to take a year of rest, they were not to work the land, for the Lord himself would provide food for the people.

This year of jubilee was not a thing the people deserved. If they were slaves, it was generally because they had sold themselves into

slavery to pay off their debts. If they were homeless, it was generally because they had sold their land for money. If they were in debt, it was because they borrowed what they could not pay.

Yet despite their failures, every 49th year they were to be set free and their land and homes returned to them. This was a gift that God gave to his people, the restoration of freedom.

When Christ came, he proclaimed the unending year of Jubilee for all the people.

Isaiah 61:1-2 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me . . . To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,

Christ came to proclaim the year of Jubilee, to give freedom to those who do not deserve it.

By nature, we are slaves to sin. Why? Because we choose to partake in sin and that sin ruins our lives. It doesn't matter if we are talking about anger, or resentment, or drunkenness, or pornography, or drugs. When we choose to do that which is sinful, we quickly become slaves to sin, and without Christ we would remain such.

But the blood of Christ poured out before the seat of God has begun the year of Jubilee. Freedom from the sins which we have bound ourselves to has been proclaimed through his name.

Freedom is the gift of God that we have through Jesus Christ. Having been set free we can return to slavery and homelessness, or we can live in His righteousness.

In our sinfulness we often believe that freedom means that we can do whatever we want, live however we like. WE believe that no one can tell me what to do. God's word teaches us that freedom is the opportunity to serve one another in love.

Galatians 5:13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Freedom is not the ability to do whatever I want but to live in the righteousness of Christ.

This was something our founding fathers understood. They understood that democracy and freedom only work when individuals are responsible in how they use that freedom.

This is true in our nation, and even more so in our life to Christ. We have been set free by Christ not so that I can do what I want but so that free from sin we can serve one another in love.

Luther commenting on this verse speaks about how he preached the free gospel of Jesus Christ. He preached that all are forgiven through Jesus, but he says many people used this as an excuse to give in to

every fleshly desire. Such people Luther says are swine and he could almost wish that they were still under the tyranny of the pope.

Such people transform the freedom of Christ into a license for the lust of the flesh and such people are we at times.

Many years ago, my friends and I were in California driving along Monterey Bay. Seeing the high hills on one side of the road, I suggested that we stop and climb one just for the fun of it. There were no paths up the hill but that only made it more exciting. For a week all four of us suffered the worse poison oak I have ever encountered. Every bit of our bodies were covered with itchy boils that would not go away.

We were young and thought we were free to do as we wished. The result was that we spent a week unable to do anything, stuck at home in misery. Such is the result for everyone who believes that the freedom that Christ has given to us means that they can live as we wish. Such people are not free at all but become slaves again to sin.

We preach Christ crucified and freedom from sin through him. Sin and the Law have no jurisdiction over us as "**there is now no condemnation.**" Because we are free from sin, guilt and condemnation, we use our freedom to love one another.

In our sinfulness we often take freedom for granted. God's word reminds us to be on guard lest we lose what Christ has given to us.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

While we are on this earth it is not possible that such freedom can be taken for granted. Wherever there is freedom there are evil men who will attempt to enslave for their own greed those who have been set free. So, it was from the beginning of the United States. There were men who used their freedom to enslave others and still to this day it continues in various ways. Even more so are there evil men who will use our freedom in Christ as an opportunity to enslave us. Jude warns us against this.

Jud 1:4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

For this reason, Paul warns us to stand fast, that is to stay alert and keep on the watch, lest our freedom in Christ be stolen from us.

If you are a slave your master will fight to keep you as a slave. If you are free, you must guard this liberty. Many will attempt to lure and trick you into slavery. This is the point Jesus makes in the parable of the empty house.

There are many who through various means would subjugate you again to the law and to sin. Paul urges us to stand fast in the freedom of Christ.

John 8:31-32 If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

This is the truth that makes you free. That you who were dead in sin are forgiven through Jesus Christ. Since you have been forgiven, forgive one another as Christ forgave you, and do not let anyone convince you that there is anything you must do to earn God's love.

We proclaim the year of Jubilee. We preach freedom through Christ. Sins forgiven. Debt cancelled. Slaves set free. Having been set free do not return to living in sin. Having been set free, keep watch lest your freedom be stolen from you. Amen.