

BENEFITS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN – VICTORY OVER SIN

Romans 7:24

INTRODUCTION

- A. "It is a tormenting thing to fear what one cannot overcome."
- B. Without Christ, man would be fearfully and helplessly in the bondage of sin: RO 7:24. "
- C. In Christ, however, the child of God is freed from the dominion of sin — both the guilt of sin in the past and the tyranny of sin in the present - LK 4:16-21. Cf. CO 1:13.
 - 1. RO 6:1-2.
 - 2. RO 6:17-18.
- D. In this study, we will examine the nature and value of freedom from sin as one of the benefits of becoming a Christian.

DISCUSSION**I. THE GOSPEL — A GOSPEL OF FREEDOM**

- A. The gospel of Christ is "good news" for the very reason that it is a message of liberation - IS 61:1-3 (cf. LK 4:16-21); 2 CO 3:17. Cf. RO 8:21; GA 2:4; 5:1; JA 1:25; 2:12.
- B. God is the God of deliverance - EX 20:2.
 - 1. Sin, like slavery, oppresses and degrades man - JN 8:34.
 - 2. God loves the oppressed and comes to their rescue - EX 3:7, 8; DT 7:6-8; EZ 9:8, 9; RO 15:4. Cf. JN 3:16; RO 5:6, 8; 1 CO 5:7.
- C. God, through Jesus Christ, provides freedom for the Christian.
 - 1. Freedom = absence of unjust restraint.
 - a. Freedom can be: Collective or personal. External or internal.
 - b. The freedom offered by Christ was not of the type expected by many of the Jews — Acts 1:6.
 - c. Freedom in Christ pertains to the inner man — and it may be enjoyed even under conditions of external restraint - Acts 16:23-25; 1 CO 7:22; 2 TI 2:9. Cf. JN 18:36.
 - 2. Christ offers freedom from:
 - a. The tyranny of Satan - Acts 26:18; CO 2:15; 1 JN 2:13, 14; 4:4. Cf. LK 13:16; Acts 10:38.
 - b. Sin - JN 8:30-36.
 - 1) Guilt of past sins - Acts 2:38; 1 JN 1:7-9.
 - 2) Temptation - 1 CO 10:13; 2 PT 2:9.
 - 3) Practice of sin - 1 JN 5:18. Cf. 2:1, 2.
 - a) "Redemption" is not only from the guilt and consequences of sin, but also from sin itself. Cf. TS 2:14; 1 PE 1:18. (Cf. PS 130:8; EK 37:23.)
 - b) Christianity has two emphases: Christ as Savior and Christ as King, Christ for us and Christ in us.
 - c) God not only forgives our sins through Christ, but grants us the power to overcome sin in our lives.
 - d) We are "saved" from sin in both the above senses - RO 6:1-7,12,14-23; 1 PE 4:1-3; 1 JN 3:4-9. Cf. JN 1:29; 1 CO 1:8, 9; 2 CO 5:21; HE 9:14; 1 PE 2:24; 2 PE 1:3, 4; 1 JN 2:1.
 - c. The fear of death - 1 CO 15:56, 57; HE 2:14, 15. Cf. RO 6:20-23.
 - 3. The Christian enjoys a "servanthood" which, in contrast to Satan's, is loving, beneficial, and pleasant - MT 11:28-30; RO 6:17,18; 1 JN 5:3.

4. The contrast between the joys of serving Christ and the agonies of serving Satan is stark and real: "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'"
RO 8:15.

D. In view of the beauty of freedom in Christ, it is amazing (and ironic) that anyone would reject Christianity because it is too "confining."

II. FREEDOM IN CHRIST — A DISCIPLINED FREEDOM

A. Freedom is not the same as license, libertinism, autonomy, antinomianism, or anarchy.

1. True freedom never confers the unlimited power to do with oneself whatever one wants. Cf. GE 3:1-6; GA 5:13; 1 PE 2:16; 2 PE 2:18, 19.
2. "Do your own thing" is the most vulgar phrase of our century. Permissiveness always destroys excellence" (Elton Trueblood).
3. Freedom and law are not contradictory, but complementary.

B. The blessings of freedom in Christ involve:

1. The necessity of guidance. We are not "our own master" - PS 119:9-16, 33-35, 97,103,105; JE 10:23.
2. The goodness of divine revelation - DT 8:3 (cf. MT 4:3, 4); PS 19:7-14; 2 TI 3:16, 17; 1 JN 5:3. Cf. LE 18:5; DT 4:5-8; 6:1-9; PS 119:45; 1 TI 1:8.
3. The benefit of conscience - 1 TI 1:5, 6; 4:1, 2.18. Christianity makes a man "free to do right."
4. The advantage of control. The Christian is under the beneficial "control" of Christ - 2 CO 5:14; 1 PE 3:15.
5. The value of discipline - 1 CO 9:24-27; 2 PE 2:19.
 - a. "Freedom is moving easy in harness" (Robert Frost).
 - b. "Following the path of least resistance is what makes people and rivers crooked."
 - c. "Don't let the good things of life rob you of the best things" (B. Rothman).
6. The importance of correction - PR 3:11, 12; 6:23; 2 TI 3:16, 17; HE 12:5-11.

III. THE GIFT OF FREEDOM — A TREASURE TO PRESERVE

A. Like any freedom, spiritual freedom must be cherished and protected. Cf. JG 2:11-15; 2 PE 2:20-22.

1. We must be "strong" in the Lord and resist Satan's encroachments on us - EP 6:10-18. Cf. 2 CO 2:11; JA 4:7; 1 PE 5:8.
2. We must guard our freedom against false teachers - 2 PE 2:18-22. Cf. GA 5:1; CO 2:16-23; 2 TI 3:6.

B. Our freedom calls for gratitude and godly living, including:

1. Growth in the ability to live above sin - EP 4:20-24; 1 JN 2:1; 3:9.
 - a. The "indicative" (you have died to sin) must become the "imperative" (sin not).
 - b. "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (RO 6:2).
2. Unselfish, loving exercise of our freedom - MT 23:4; RO 14:1,10-13; 1 C. 8:4, 7-9, 13.
3. Sympathy and concern for those still bound by sin - LK 13:15, 16; RO 9:1-3.

CONCLUSION

A. The Christian's freedom from sin is reason to rejoice.

1. Not only are we free from sin, but we also are free for service:
 - a. To God - 1 TH 1:9.

- b. To righteousness - RO 6:18.
 - c. To our fellow man - 1 CO 9:19.
 - 2. We are privileged in Christ to share in His victory over evil.
 - a. JN 16:33.
 - b. 1 CO 15:56-57; Cf. 2 CO 2:14-16.
 - c. 1 JN 5:4-5; Cf. RE 3:21.
 - 3. We can be confident of the eternal outcome of our freedom from sin.
 - a. JN 10:28-29.
- B. The Christian's new freedom imparts courage and peace.
 - 1. 2 TI 1:7.
 - 2. PH 4:7.