

I Want to Be Free (Freedom in Christ)

Lesson:

- I. When I was in High School, my favorite musical group was the Ohio Players. That probably says a lot about my heathen background, but that's a story for another time. One song that I liked from the Ohio Players was, "*I Want to Be Free*." This is a sentiment that is pretty much universal in nature, isn't it? You see, freedom is a blessed state of being. Think of all the sacrifices that have been made and the lives that have been given in quest of political and religious freedom. Think of the millions of people who have come to the shores of America in times past because they desired to be free. Think of the many lovers of liberty who busted out of the strongholds of communism for the freedom of western society. Yes, freedom is a most blessed state of being. Surely we all can say with the Ohio Players, "I Want to Be Free."

- II. Here is the good news—God wants us to be free too. You see, freedom is not just a secular subject, it is a biblical subject as well. However, the freedom the Bible speaks of the most is spiritual in nature. Yes the Bible has some things to say about physical freedom, especially in the Old Testament, but the New Testament is mostly concerned with the freedom to be found in Christ and that, ladies and gentlemen, is the freedom we should desire the most. But what does being free in Christ mean? What does this freedom involve and are there any rules that regulate this freedom. Is the Christian who has obtained this freedom free to do whatever he wants, whenever he wants to do it? Does this freedom imply that we as Christians are no longer under any kind of law, and just how is this freedom attained anyway? I want to talk to you this morning about the freedom that can be achieved in Christ.

Lesson:

I. How Is Freedom in Christ Attained?

Spiritual freedom is not automatic. It is not a state that one achieves accidentally. Freedom in Christ must be sought for and attained. So, the question is, "How is this freedom attained?" Jesus tells us in John 8:31-32.

John 8:31-32

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Spiritual freedom comes by knowing and adhering to the truth. But what is truth? Truth, ladies and gentlemen, is the Word of God (**Jn. 17:17; 2 Tim. 2:15**). When one feeds upon the word of God, digesting its contents and incorporating its principles into his life, his is set free. Now what does the word of truth say one must do? Here it is: *Hear, believe, repent, confess and be baptized.*

II. From What Are Christians Made Free?

A) Sin (Rom. 6:2, 6-7, 16-18).

Surely we should realize the significance of being made free from sin. **First of all, we can't go to heaven after a while without being servants of righteousness.** Being servants of righteousness implies that righteousness is now the master of our lives, i.e., we know follow the requirements of righteousness. Righteousness governs our life instead of sin. We participate in the doing of righteousness. Is this important? Let's see **(1 Jn. 2:29; 3:7)**. Now, you can't be a doer of righteousness, i.e., you can't be a servant of righteousness without being set free from sin **(Rom. 6:18-22)**. Furthermore, if we are servants of sin, we are living **Godless lives. Sin separates from God (Isa. 59:1-2; 1 Jn. 1:5-6)**. This Godless state is one of the things from which we are set free when we obey the gospel **(Eph. 2:11-13)**.

B) Law of works (Rom. 7:1-4).

We are free from a law that demands to be carried out flawlessly. The Law of Moses was this type of law. **In fact, any law that is void of Christ and His soul-cleansing blood cannot deliver us from captivity and lead us to spiritual freedom.** Why not? Is it because that kind of law is inherently bad? No. Remember, the Law of Moses, which is a law set forth and established by God, was a law of works. It was not a bad law **(Rom. 7:7-12)**. So, the Law wasn't bad within itself. The problem was it was too good, that is, its standard was too high for man to meet **(Gal. 3:10; Rom. 10:5; Rom. 3:20)**. **The requirements of the Law could not be meant.** It demanded absolute perfection from imperfect people. So the problem wasn't with the Law; the problem was with the people **(Heb. 8:7-8)**. **So then, because of the weakness of man, a law of works destines those under it to destruction (Rom. 4:15; 7:14ff)**. Thank God we are under a better law, that is, a law of grace and mercy whereby when we sin we have an advocate with the Father to help us. That advocate is Jesus.

C) God's Wrath (Rom. 5:9).

Spiritual freedom not only means we get to go to heaven; it also means we get to avoid spending eternity in hell **(2 Thess. 1:7-9)**.

D) Fear (Rom. 8:14-15).

Fear is something that was introduced by Satan along with sin. Before sin there was no fear, but fear arrived on the coattail of sin **(Gen. 3:6-10)**. However, Jesus destroyed Satan's power to produce fear when He died on the cross. We have been set free from fear. Just think about it, as Christians what do we have to fear? **We do not have to fear man (Heb. 13:5-6; Matt. 10:28; 2 Cor. 4:8-9). We do not have to fear death (1 Cor. 15:50-58). We do not have to fear the judgment (1 Jn. 4:17-18).** In Christ we have freedom from fear.

III. From What Are Christians Not Free?

A) Not free from law.

Yes we have escaped the condemnation of a law of works, but that doesn't mean that we are altogether without law. We are bound by the "law of faith." How do we know that we are still under a law today? First, because if we were not under any kind of law, it would be impossible to sin since sin is a transgression of law (**1 Jn. 3:4**). Since it is possible for a Christian to sin (**1 Jn. 1:8-9**), we must be under some kind of law.

Second, the Bible state clearly that we are under law (**Rom. 8:1-2; 1 Cor. 9:19-21**).

B) Not free to sin.

One gospel preacher said publicly that "a Christian is the only person who can sin all he wants to." How utterly absurd that is, yet many people believe that. Based upon the strength of God's grace, some say that sin will not condemn a Christian. A certain Baptist preacher is on record as saying, "***We (Baptists) take the position that a Christian's sin does not damn his soul.***" Is he not affirming that a Christian is free to sin? Ladies and gentlemen, the Bible does not share that philosophy and the only one who wants you to believe it is the devil. As great as God's grace is, it doesn't give us the right to sin. God's grace didn't give the saints at Rome the right to sin, did it (**Rom. 6:1**). The grace of God did give the saints at Corinth the freedom to sin either (**1 Cor. 6:9-10**). Nor did the grace of God give Paul the right to sin, and Paul new it (**1 Cor. 9:27**). No, as Christians we are free from sin, but we are not free to sin. In fact, as we saw in our opening point, when we practice sinning we become sin's servants all over again.

C) Not free to change God's Word.

1. **This fact emphasized (2 Jn. 9-11; Rev. 22:18-19).**
2. **This fact exemplified (Lev. 10:1-2; Num. 20:1-12).**

Conclusion:

Yes, freedom in Christ is wonderful, but let's make sure we know what its limitations are. For just like freedom in the physical world, our spiritual freedom can be lost.