

Last week we talked about the Four Freedoms that were worth fighting for but are only truly experienced in Christ Jesus. They were the freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of want, and the freedom of fear. But there is another Freedom to consider today. Let’s call it the Fifth Freedom.

The Fifth Freedom- Freedom from Sin

There is this little three letter word that gives us problems: **SIN**.

Every human being on earth has a sin problem and every one of us needs a Savior who will set us free from sin.

Sin is mankind’s problem.

- Sin is turning away from God’s ways, which we were created for, and choosing our own.
- Sin destroys lives because sin is contrary to God’s plan for our lives.
- Sin destroys. Sin hinders. Sin blocks the flow of God’s blessings.

ILL: Umbrella example. God is always raining his fullest blessing upon you! 100 % of his love is being poured out upon you all the time and he never stops.

BUT when you sin, it’s like popping open an umbrella. The umbrella of sin blocks God’s fullest blessing upon your life.

Sure, by grace, you are still getting a little wet every now and then, but the sin you choose to participate in is blocking the full flow of God’s love. God’s love is still being poured out, fully flowing, but you will not experience it until you repent (Close the Umbrella) and are set free from your sin.

No Longer Slaves to Sin

Sin leads to tragedy and, ultimately, death of one kind or another. And as many of us have learned already, sin is a trap. It’s a snare that we get caught in and, once it get’s ahold of us, it doesn’t like to let go!

“Sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.”

Followers of Jesus are not only saved, but they should also be free from sin and its bondage!

True Freedom Comes Through Christ

Jesus told his followers in **John 8:31-32** “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. **32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.”...**

Then he added... **John 8:34-36** “Very truly I tell you, **everyone who sins is a slave to sin.**

35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.

36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Paul, in his second letter to the Church in Corinth, would later add...

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

18 And we all, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (NIV)

NOT PERFECTION, BUT NOT LIVING IN BONDAGE EITHER!

STRIVE FOR PERFECTION. THAT’S OUR GOAL. Because of Jesus WE are FREE from the BONDAGE of SIN!

When it comes to sin, we need to decide. “Should I Stay, or Should I Go”

Should I stay in sin, or go and enjoy my freedom in Christ Jesus?

What Is Freedom?

- In the lyrics to “Me and Bobby McGee”, Janis Joplin sang:
Freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose. Nothin', it ain't nothin' honey, if it ain't free.
I don't think I like that definition. Or if it's true, I'm not free, because I've got some things I don't want to lose.
- Is freedom the ability to do whatever you want to do, whenever you want to do it?
Someone once said... ***“Freedom is being able to do what you please without considering anyone except your spouse, your children, your parents, the police, your boss, your life-insurance company, your doctor, federal and state authorities, and your neighbors.”***
- The true freedom Jesus and Paul were talking about is not necessarily “freedom to go wherever one likes or do whatever one wants to do” but rather it is “freedom from restraint and obligation” in general; the freedom from the control or bondage of sin.

Freedom With Commitment and Responsibility!

In John 8:11 Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery and told her... **“Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”** (NKJ) You are forgiven. You are free. Now stop willfully sinning.

As God's word graciously exposes or uncovers the sin in our lives, we also understand that the grace of God is not a license to continue in the sin that we have been set free from.

**Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?
2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?**

Peter writes in **1 Peter 2:16 (NLT) For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil.**

The bottom line is that we all have to serve somebody. **As Bob Dylan sang... “It may be the devil or the Lord, but you are going to have to serve somebody.”** You will have to serve sin or righteousness.

Romans 6:20 and 22

20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.

22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

You will serve somebody or something! I choose to serve Master and Teacher, Christ Jesus.

I want to serve the one who sets me free, who loves me, who wants the best for me, and graces me with favor and enabling power! I choose to serve Him!

Bold Next Step: This week I will surrender to the leadership of Christ Jesus and the control of righteousness.

How to Experience True Freedom

1. Walk In the Spirit

**Galatians 5:16-17 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.
17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.
They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.**

2. Stay In the Word of God

Jesus told his followers in **John 8:31-32 “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.**

32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.”...

James 1:25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

3. Remember That the Alternative to Freedom Is Bondage and Spiritual Death

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Choose the Life Cycle rather than the Death Cycle.

DEATH CYCLE Free from Sin but no longer living free from sin. You choose the yoke of bondage. The Holy Spirit is grieved and hindered by the presence of unconfessed sin in your life. Where the Spirit is not, there is not liberty.

LIFE CYCLE Free from sin and living free from sin. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom! Due to a lack of sin, you experience more of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life, hence more freedom!

CHRIST JESUS CAN BREAK THE DEATH CYCLE IF YOU CONFESS YOUR SINS

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Bold Next Step: I will choose to live in the life cycle rather than the death cycle.

4. Serve One Another In Love

Galatians 5:13-14 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Think about how serving others in love would help us overcome our selfish sinful desires.

EX: Harriet Tubman was a woman who knew how precious freedom is. Harriet's grandparents were members of the Ashanti people of Ghana. Her grandparents were kidnapped from their land in 1725 and sold into slavery. Harriet was the third generation in her family to live as slaves. But Harriet Tubman became a link to freedom, not just for her family, but for hundreds of other slave families as well. Harriet became the most famous conductor on what has come to be called the "Underground Railroad."

Harriet's flight from slavery was sparked by rumors that there were plans to sell her and two of her brothers to a chain gang. As if the back-breaking labors of the chain gangs weren't enough, they would probably never see their family again. So, Harriet decided to escape. She wandered by her parent's cottage that night, singing a gospel tune about being "bound for the Promised Land." It was a secret code many slaves used to signal that they were planning to leave.

Harriet Tubman's escape that she began that night was successful. She traveled mostly by night and hid in fields and barns during the day. There were designated stops along her multi-state trek at the homes of those sympathetic to the cause of freedom. Her destination was the Northern states, or even Canada, where many escaped slaves made their homes. Her life depended on her every step, and she was determined to be free.

The fact that this woman successfully traveled to freedom is remarkable enough in itself. The fact that she chose to return to slave-country many, many times to lead others on the Underground Railroad to freedom is astounding. She risked recapture, beatings, jail, and even death to help others out of slavery. She and her charges must have suffered from hunger, fear, lack of sleep, extremes of weather, exhaustion, but they traveled on. Surely, there were times when they all wanted to turn back.

It was at these times that we are told Harriet counseled, "Children, if you are tired, keep going; if you are scared, keep going; if you are hungry, keep going." Harriet Tubman herself kept going, risking her life to lead countless numbers of slaves to freedom.

This woman appreciated freedom. She understood that it required commitment and self-denial, and she committed herself to **helping others to no longer be slaves but to enjoy freedom.**

Harriet Tubman took Paul's words seriously. (...*serve one another in love*)

Like Harriet Tubman, have we committed ourselves to helping others to no longer be slaves but to enjoy freedom as well?

- Or do we lack passion for setting others free from sin because we ourselves tend to dabble in sin.
- We want to see just how close we can get to the sin line without getting burned.

Like Harriet Tubman, do you take Paul's words seriously:

Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.

- Or are you too busy living for yourself; caught up in self-absorption?

Will you help others find True Freedom in Christ Jesus by:

- Serving families and children at our Back to School Party! This Saturday July 24th.
- Going public with your story of salvation with Water Baptism next Sunday July 25th.
- Attending Next Step Ministry Teams on Wednesday July 28th to discover your gifts and talents and how you might better serve others.

Bold Next Step: Today I will sign up on my communication card for one or more of these upcoming events, so that I can use my freedom to serve others.

- **Serving families and children at our Back to School Party! This Saturday July 24th.**
- **Going public with your story of salvation with Water Baptism next Sunday July 25th.**
- **Attending Next Step Ministry Teams on Wednesday July 28th to discover your gifts and talents and how you might better serve others.**

Freedom Is Not Necessarily Free. It Normally Costs Somebody Something.

The Four Freedoms we talked about last week cost the lives of countless men and women who fought for our freedom as American citizens.

The true freedom that only comes through Christ cost God His only son and cost Christ Jesus the cross. The price paid for our freedom from sin and bondage to sin was a high cost to pay. The blood of Jesus.

Salvation Call: THE COST of FREEDOM is HIGH.

Christ Jesus paid the price. He will set you free today!

With the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, we must stand firm and boldly walk in our freedom.

LIFE CYCLE

Free from Sin

Where the Spirit of the Lord is
There is freedom!

Due to a lack of sin you
experience more of the presence
of the Holy Spirit in your life

DEATH CYCLE

Free from Sin
(No longer living free from sin)

The Holy Spirit is grieved, and
Bondage.
hindered by the presence of
unconfessed Sin in Your life.
Where the Spirit is not,
there is not liberty.

You choose the Yoke of

CHRIST JESUS CAN BREAK THE DEATH CYCLE
IF YOU CONFESS YOUR SINS
1 JOHN 1:9