

Freedom in Christ

In my article in last weeks' *NEWSLETTER*, I wrote about the freedoms we as Americans celebrate. The Constitution guarantees us the freedoms of speech, religion, the press, lawful assembly, and petition. Wars have been fought in order to guard our freedoms, as well as win freedom for oppressed people.

However, those freedoms pale in comparison to the freedoms we have in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, freedoms God has given us because of Jesus' sacrifice. I have often said) that God has set us free in order for us to become slaves. Although it sounds unusual, that's exactly what He has done.

There are many verses in the New Testament, mostly from the apostle Paul, that explain our freedoms to us. In Romans 6, Paul speaks of baptism as a death and burial of the sinful man and the resurrection of a newborn child of God. He then says: “... **we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.**” (Romans 6:6-7)

We have been emancipated! We are, according to Paul, free from a life dominated by sin. But that's not all. In verse 18, Paul continues the thought: “**You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.**” You see? Freed to become slaves. An earlier passage, verses 16-18, Paul explains the transfer of ownership, from master to master:

“Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.”

We no longer cater to the demands of our old master, Satan. Jesus redeemed us (bought us with the price of His blood) and now He is our Master and we do His bidding. In addition, being a slave to righteousness with Christ as our Master has provided us with yet an additional freedom: freedom from spiritual death. In Romans 8:1-2, Paul tells the Romans that “**there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.**” By being dominated by sin, we are subject to punishment, what **Revelation 20:6,14** calls the “**second death.**” Sure, we'll all die physically unless we're fortunate enough to be living when Christ comes again, but those of us who are Christ's slaves will be spared from a spiritual death.

The words of Jesus ring true, although it's been over two thousand years since he spoke them. **John 8:31-32, 34-36:**

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, 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.”

Praise God for the freedom to become Christ's slave!

--Johnny Stephens