

# Christian Freedom (2)

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Bible verses [John 8:31-32, NKJV]

[John 8:31-32] *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

## 4. Freedom from Despondence

The third freedom of all true Christians is the freedom from despondence. We all have experienced discouragements in the past. As we walk the narrow pathways as Christians, sometimes we are discouraged and even depressed that this way seems just too difficult and the life's journey is too arduous to continue. When such feeling of helplessness comes to us, we are tempted to harbor complaints to God and to take wrong steps that we later come to regret.

When Jezebel, the wife of king Ahab of Israel, threatened to take the life of the prophet Elijah, he feared for his life and fled to the Judean wilderness- a long way from the place of his ministry. There, he complained to God about Jezebel's threat and sought God to take his life instead [1 Kings 19: 1-8]. God sent an angel who fed Elijah and touched him twice.

He received strength from this feeding by an angel to travel for 40 days to Mount Horeb in Arabia. There, Elijah poured out the discouragement and fear in his heart to God. Elijah was in deep distress and downcast. He lost the vision of his ministry so soon after the great victory on Mount Carmel over the prophets of Baal. Mount Horeb, however, was a place of encouragement, new vision of mission and strength. Elijah arose from there and went back to his place of ministry to fulfill the mission given by God.

The children of God have the Holy Spirit who strengthens their hearts and encourages them to go on as God encouraged the prophet Elijah thousands of years ago. When we groan within us due to persecutions, difficulties and disappointments along the way as Elijah was, the Spirit of Christ also groans together with us. Not only does He groan together with us, but He also prays on our behalf.

*[Romans 8: 26-27] Likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

Holy Spirit searches our hearts and understands what causes us to groan and suffer. When we are too downcast and discouraged, He intercedes for us. In other words, He speaks the words of a prayer that we hardly find the strength to utter before God. We have such a wonderful Intercessor and Helper.

Holy Spirit, who is the third person of God-head, was promised to the disciples of Jesus before He went on to suffering and death. He referred the Holy Spirit as the Helper because His mission here on the earth is to help the children of God. Jesus Christ went back to His Father after His resurrection. In His place, however, He sent the Spirit of Christ, the Helper, to the Christians. And when a sinner repents and accepts Jesus Christ as his/her Savior, the Spirit of Christ comes into her heart and in-dwells for as long as she allows.

*[John 16: 7] Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.*

So, the Spirit of Christ helps every Christian when she is downcast, discouraged and loses strength. He helps the Christian eat the holy manna from heaven and rise up to continue on. As Elijah ran back to his mission field after his meeting with God on Mount Horeb, we all can have a Mount Horeb experience of meeting with God and receiving fresh strength and vision. Then, we can run and ride high.

*[Isaiah 40:31] But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

God imposed a number of physical limitations to His creation. One of them is the force of gravity. The force of gravity applies throughout the entire universe. Newton has discovered this law as the gravitational force between two objects is proportional to the product of their masses and is inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them. This law is applicable not only here on the earth but also out in the space among celestial bodies.

We have overcome the gravity, in a sense, by inventing airplanes and rockets. However, an airplane cannot fly forever and neither can a rocket. They must either land or fall down due to gravity when their fuel supply runs out. The prophet Isaiah observed, however, that the eagles defy the force of gravity and fly high, riding on the wings of winds. What Isaiah declares in this verse is that there are two creatures of God who are given exceptional powers to defy the gravitational force and to ride high in spite of this universal force. They are eagles and God's people who wait on the Lord God and are helped by the Spirit of God.

Every time I visit the mountain tops in this country, I enjoy watching eagles soaring high with the rise of upward winds without even moving their wings. They ride on the winds and allow them to carry them from a valley to high above the mountain top. Watching the freedom of the eagles flying high as carried by the uplifting force of the wind in spite of the universal gravitational force that pulls them downward is truly amazing. Such eagle flights point to how the Christians' spirits can be lifted high above the din and turmoil of this world. God has promised He will provide this very special privilege to all His people who wait on the Lord and lay their self in the complete control of the Holy Spirit. May each of us experience this uplifting of our spirit through the Holy Spirit every day.

## **5. Freedom from Fear**

The fourth freedom that all Christians have is the freedom from the fear of separation from the love of God.

*[Romans 8: 38-39] For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Children in orphanages are said to be insecure throughout their life because they experienced separation from their parents. Many such children have been entrusted to the care of an institution by their living parents who, for various reasons, could no longer support their children. Such an experience of being deserted by their own parents creates in their hearts a desire to have a secure, loving home environment. Many unfortunate children are placed in temporary care homes, which do not provide stable, loving environments in many cases. Thus, these children are constantly seeking a stable, loving home environment where they can feel secure and being loved.

We are born into this world as separated from the love of God. But, when we meet Jesus Christ through the gospel of Christ, we can come to know the hand of God extended to us in love. When we take His hand, we are brought into the warmth of His loving family, where we feel secure, forgiven, made right with God and being loved by the Maker of the universe. Unlike the orphans, Christians need not fear separation from the love of Christ. We have the most solid security in Christ in that we know and are confident that God will keep us in His love for the following five reasons, which apostle Paul cites:

### **a. God is for us [v. 8: 31]**

The first reason of our confidence in our freedom from any fear of separation is that God is on our side. When God chose Moses to lead the people of Israel out of the bondage of slavery in Egypt, all of the powers of Pharaoh could not prevent God's work of salvation for His people. God was on their side and He was working to liberate them from the awful slavery that had them bound for so long.

*[Romans 8:31] What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

Friends, if God is for us, if God is working to keep us free from the bondage of sin and death, who can keep us bound in the slavery of sin and death? What things can rob us of the freedom we enjoy in Christ? Nothing will ever separate us from the love of God, ever, as long as we are on God's side and trust in His saving power.

## **b. Christ died for us [8:32]**

The second reason we are free from any fear is that God gave His own son to die for us when we were sinners, when we did not have any hope of life beyond death and when all we had to live for were the things of this world that would vanish when death comes. If God gave us His most cherished Son for us when we were sinners, how much more of good things would He not spare for us to nourish us, to sustain us, and to enable us to walk with Christ so that the spiritual life in us could grow to the full maturity of Christ when our life is over.

*[Romans 8:32] He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*

God paid the greatest price to save you and me from sin and death and to bring us to His blessed family. Why then would He forsake us now that we are His children? There is absolutely no ground for fearing that any of you might be separated from God's family just because you have sinned again or faltered a number of times. The price God paid to save you was just too big for Him now to let you go. He will not let you go. His hand is too strong to let you go even when you are hanging at the edge of a cliff. God will safely keep you in His bosom, so stay within the bounds of God's love and care.

## **c. God has justified us [8:33]**

The third reason which gives us the freedom from fear as Christians is that God has declared us righteous before Him because we believe in Jesus Christ. We were sinners before and were not worthy to come into God's presence. But Christ paid the price so that we have been made right before God. In other words, we have been sentenced as "Not Guilty" by the great Judge, God, in spite of our sins because the penalty of our sins has been paid by Jesus Christ.

It is in this sense the apostle Paul declares that no one, not even Satan, can bring any charges against us because we are God's elect people who have been justified on account of the blood of Christ, as he declared in verse 33:

*[Romans 8:33] Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.*

If you ever hear a voice of Satan whispering to your ears that you are not worthy because you sinned after you professed to become a Christian, that you are only a disappointment to God because of your weakness and failures, remember that God has made you His child and He will not disown you just because you have sinned.

What parents in this world would disown their son or daughter just because she has been only disappointments to them? Regardless of what you are, where you are and how you have been living, you are still a child of your parents. Likewise, God will never disown His elect. So, never listen to the voice of Satan who tries to tell you that God is no longer interested in you, that He has disqualified you as His child, that you are no good before God, that you do not deserve His salvation, that you will be refused to enter Heaven after you die, remember the price paid for you to save your soul from sin and death by Jesus Christ, and remember that God has declared you as "innocent," and placed a stamp on you as His child. That stamp you cannot erase and therein is the security of your freedom from such fear.

## **d. Christ intercedes for us [8:34]**

The fourth reason of our confidence in our freedom from fear is that Christ intercedes for us as the apostle Paul declares in verse 34:

*[Romans 8:34] Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*

When a person is put on trial for some offence, she is represented by a defense attorney, who presents evidences and reasons for pleading to the judge so that the accused receives a lenient sentence. A defense attorney is needed because the accused does not know how to properly represent herself. A defense attorney, however, understands the predicament of the accused and knows what reasoning and arguments are needed to plead for mercy.

We have two such defense attorneys, who are our advocates before God. Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ both represent us before God to plead for forgiveness of our wrong doings and to dispense the strength and wisdom to us so that we might overcome trials and temptations.

*[Rom. 8:26-27] Likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession [g]for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

Likewise, the Son of God intercedes on our behalf [Rom. 8: 34]. The same Savior who died for us is now interceding for us in heaven. He wore a human body while He was living here on the earth. That is why He understands our weaknesses and limitations. His risen body still bears the marks of crucifixion. That is why He knows what help we need in times of troubles and trials.

*[Hebrews 4: 14-16] Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Even before Peter failed his Savior during His time of trial and torment, Lord Jesus prayed for this disciple so that he could be restored.

*[Luke 22:31-32] And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."*

Friends, this same Jesus Christ is now our High Priest who is interceding for us sitting next to His Father in heaven. He has the heart that understands the failing Christians when they fail and falter. When you have failed and feel unworthy, feel so downcast, feel that you are so discouraged to continue in the way of Christ, let us remember that our High Priest who intercedes for us was the One who died for us on Calvary's cross. The same Jesus, who walked and toiled together with His disciples on the shores of Galilee and hills of Judea, is our Advocate before God. And for this reason, we are confident that we need not fear anything. We have the freedom from fear because our souls have been freed and our Lord and Savior is interceding for us in heaven.

#### **e. Christ loves us [8: 35-39]**

Lastly, we know that Christ loves us and that is a sure reason why we have the freedom from fear and we need not fear being separated from His love, as the apostle Paul declares in verses 35 to 39:

*[Romans 8:35-39] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Through these verses Paul tells us that "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Nothing on earth or in heaven can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ because He first loved us, chose us, called us, justified us and is sanctifying us. We are not perfect and fail many times. That will not, however, remove us from the love of Christ because, if He disowns us because of our imperfections, it will mean a failure on God's part. God never fails and His words and plans are true through eternity.

If we have been saved and brought into God's family according to His perfect plan of salvation and Christ paid the price for it, He will never allow us to be separated from His family unless we willingly choose to leave Him. Even so, God's love will still be with us and He will wait for our return as the father of the prodigal son did.

One thing we need to know is that God does not shelter us from the trials and difficulties of life. Sometimes tough experiences come on our ways, often as a result of our unwise choices or as a result of actions of others that affect our lives. If a drunken driver hits your vehicle and you get hurt because of that, you cannot fault this experience to God. However, God works in mysterious ways so that all of our experiences can be turned around for the ultimate good of us Christians. God has our best for eternity in His mind.

Furthermore, if we are “more than the conquerors,” we have the God-given power to conquer. We can have victory in every day of our life through the power provided by God. If you do not seem to have victories in your life, perhaps it is best to examine how much time you spend each time with the Lord. We need to spend time with Him to receive the power so we can have victories. Jesus loves us and wants us to be victors instead of losers.

The security in Christ is an established benefit to all believing Christians as the apostle Paul declares in this chapter. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Believe it and rejoice in it! Amen.