

Freedom From Sin

This coming Saturday we will celebrate the Fourth of July. This is a time in our nation when we celebrate the freedoms we enjoy, such freedoms as the freedom of religion, the freedom of conscience, the freedom of speech, and the freedom of the press. As an American, I thank God for these freedoms and I hope they will never be taken away from us. However, in Jesus Christ we enjoy an even greater freedom—freedom from sin. Let me share three aspects of this spiritual freedom.

First, there is freedom from sin's penalty, which is death. Romans 6.23 says, "For the wages of sin is death," yet it goes on to say, "but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." The wages or payment that we deserve because of our sin is death—physical, spiritual, and eternal death. Yet, through Jesus Christ we can escape sin's penalty. That is because Jesus died in our place and suffered the death that we ourselves deserve. He suffered our judgment so that we could be free. Now this does not mean that we will not die physically; we will. Yet, it does mean that we no longer endure spiritual death and we will not face eternal death, which is separation from God in hell. Even our physical death is simply the passageway into the presence of Christ. As Paul said, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil 1.21).

Secondly, there is freedom from sin's power. Before we were saved, we were under the authority and dominion of sin. We were enslaved to sin. Paul talks about this in Romans 6. Yet, now that we are in Christ we have been freed from sin's power. Paul writes, "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace" (Rom 6.14). My master is no longer sin; my master is now Jesus Christ. Charles Wesley celebrated this spiritual emancipation with the following words: "He breaks the power of canceled sin, he sets the prisoner free; his blood can make the foulest clean, his blood availed for me." This does not mean that I am incapable of sinning or that I never fall short of God's standards; but it does mean that sin is no longer my unrepentant lifestyle. If it is, I will not inherit God's kingdom (see 1 Cor 6.9-11).

Lastly, there is freedom from sin's presence. This freedom will not be ours until we die and go to heaven or until Jesus Christ returns. As long as we live in this fallen world and indwell these unredeemed bodies, sin will remain a reality. I'm not under sin's dominion, but that doesn't mean I now

enjoy sinless perfection. Not even the Apostle Paul claimed this (see Phil 3.12-14; 1 Tim 1.15). James 3.2 says, “We all stumble in many ways,” and that is why he also told us to confess our sins to one another (see James 5.16). Yet, one day we will be completely free from sin, not just from sin’s penalty and power but also from its very presence. This is the hope of salvation that we are to put on as a helmet (see 1 Thess 5.8). This is the hope that should sustain us through all the trials and failures of life.

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