

# **A Freedom and Liberty in Life**

## **Week 9 Freedom and Liberty in Life**

Description: Submission to God is true liberty because we desire what we ought to desire and find satisfaction in what should bring us satisfaction, namely the glory of God. In addition to this, in Christ, we find freedom from the enslaving rule of fear and guilt and sin.

### **Chapter 16 (Hebrews 9:14)**

- Why is our conscience defiled according to Jesus (51) – Mark 7:15-23? “We know our conscience is defiled – not with external things like touching a corpse or eating a piece of pork. Jesus says it is what comes out of a person that defiles, not what goes in (51).”
- Where do we turn to find relief from our conscience when it condemns us (51)? – The blood of Christ.

### **Chapter 28 (1 Peter 1:18-19)**

- Can Jesus blood overcome our biology, magical curses, and the fatalism of this world (74-75)?

### **Chapter 29 (Hebrews 13:12)**

- What are the two ways that sin ruins our lives (76)?
- How does Christ restore our lives combating the two effects of sin (77) – Romans 8:1-2?

### **Chapter 39 (Hebrew 2:14-15).**

- What is Satan’s main interest and what chief lie does he tell people to accomplish his goal (96)?
- When Christ died, He took away the Devil’s most lethal weapon. What is the weapon and why is it so deadly (97)?
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FIFTY REASONS WHY  
JESUS CAME TO DIE

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## TO GIVE US A CLEAR CONSCIENCE



*How much more will the blood of Christ,  
who through the eternal Spirit offered himself  
without blemish to God, purify our conscience from  
dead works to serve the living God.*

Hebrews 9:14

Some things never change. The problem of a dirty conscience is as old as Adam and Eve. As soon as they sinned, their conscience was defiled. Their sense of guilt was ruinous. It ruined their relationship with God—they hid from him. It ruined their relation to each other—they blamed. It ruined their peace with themselves—for the first time they saw themselves and felt shame.

All through the Old Testament, conscience was an issue. But the animal sacrifices themselves could not cleanse the conscience. “Gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation” (Hebrews 9:9-10). As a foreshadowing of Christ, God counted the blood of the animals as sufficient for cleansing the flesh—the ceremonial uncleanness, but not the conscience.

No animal blood could cleanse the conscience. They knew it (see Isaiah 53 and Psalm 51). And we know it. So a new high priest comes—Jesus the Son of God—with a better sacrifice: him-

self. “How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:14). The animal sacrifices foreshadowed the final sacrifice of God’s Son, and the death of the Son reaches back to cover all the sins of God’s people in the old time period, and forward to cover all the sins of God’s people in the new time period.

So here we are in the modern age—the age of science, Internet, organ transplants, instant messaging, cell phones—and our problem is fundamentally the same as always: Our conscience condemns us. We don’t feel good enough to come to God. And no matter how distorted our consciences are, this much is true: We are not good enough to come to him.

We can cut ourselves, or throw our children in the sacred river, or give a million dollars to the United Way, or serve in a soup kitchen on Thanksgiving, or perform a hundred forms of penance and self-injury, and the result will be the same: The stain remains, and death terrifies. We know that our conscience is defiled—not with external things like touching a corpse or eating a piece of pork. Jesus said it is what comes out of a person that defiles, not what goes in (Mark 7:15-23). We are defiled by pride and self-pity and bitterness and lust and envy and jealousy and covetousness and apathy and fear—and the actions they breed. These are all “dead works.” They have no spiritual life in them. They don’t come from new life; they come from death, and they lead to death. That is why they make us feel hopeless in our consciences.

The only answer in these modern times, as in all other times, is the blood of Christ. When our conscience rises up and condemns us, where will we turn? We turn to Christ. We turn to the suffering and death of Christ—the blood of Christ. This is the only cleansing agent in the universe that can give the conscience relief in life and peace in death.

## TO FREE US FROM THE FUTILITY OF OUR ANCESTRY



*You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from  
your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,  
but with the precious blood of Christ,  
like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*

1 Peter 1:18-19

Secular people in the West, and more primitive people in animistic tribes, have this in common: They believe in the power of ancestral bondage. They call it by different names. Animistic people may speak in terms of ancestral spirits and the transmission of curses. Secular people may speak of genetic influence or the wounding of abusive, codependent, emotionally distant parents. In both cases there is a sense of fatalism that we are bound to live with the curse or the wounds from our ancestry. The future seems futile and void of happiness.

When the Bible says, “You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers,” it is referring to an empty, meaningless, unprofitable way of living that ends with destruction. It says that these “futile ways” are connected with our ancestors. It doesn’t say how. The crucial thing is to notice how we are freed from the bondage of this futility. The power of the liberator defines the extent of the liberation.

The liberation from ancestral bondage happens “not with

perishable things such as silver or gold.” Silver and gold represent the most valuable things that could be paid for our ransom. But we all know they are useless. The richest people are often the most enslaved to the futility. A wealthy tribal chief may be tormented by the fear of an ancestral hex on his life. A secular president of a successful company may be driven by unconscious forces from his background that ruin his marriage and children.

Silver and gold are powerless to help. The suffering and death of Jesus provide what is needed: not gold or silver but “the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.” When Christ died, God had a view to the relationship between us and our ancestors. He meant to set us free from the futility we inherited from them. That is one of the great reasons Christ died.

No hex can hold against you, if your sins are all forgiven, and you are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and you are ransomed and loved by the Creator of the universe. The suffering and death of Jesus is the final reason why the Bible says of God’s people, “There is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel” (Numbers 23:23). When Jesus died, all the blessings of heaven were purchased for those who trust him. And when God blesses, none can curse.

Nor is any wound that was inflicted by a parent beyond the healing of Jesus. The healing ransom is called “the precious blood of Christ.” The word “precious” conveys infinite value. Therefore the ransom is infinitely liberating. No bondage can stand against it. Therefore, let us turn from silver and gold and embrace the gift of God.

TO FREE US FROM THE  
SLAVERY OF SIN



*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood  
and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father,  
to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.*

Revelation 1:5-6

*Jesus also suffered outside the gate  
in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.*

Hebrews 13:12

Our sin ruins us in two ways. It makes us guilty before God, so that we are under his just condemnation; and it makes us ugly in our behavior, so that we disfigure the image of God we were meant to display. It damns us with guilt, and it enslaves us to lovelessness.

The blood of Jesus frees us from both miseries. It satisfies God's righteousness so that our sins can be justly forgiven. And it defeats the power of sin to make us slaves to lovelessness. We have seen how Christ absorbs the wrath of God and takes away our guilt. But now how does the blood of Christ liberate us from the slavery of sin?

The answer is not that he is a powerful example to us and inspires us to free ourselves from selfishness. Oh, yes, Jesus is an example to us. And a very powerful one. He clearly meant for us to imitate him: "A new commandment I give to you, that you

love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” (John 13:34). But the call to imitation is not the power of liberation. There is something deeper.

Sin is such a powerful influence in our lives that we must be liberated by God’s power, not by our willpower. But since we are sinners we must ask, Is the power of God directed toward our liberation or our condemnation? That’s where the suffering of Christ comes in. When Christ died to remove our condemnation, he opened, as it were, the valve of heaven’s mighty mercy to flow on behalf of our liberation from the power of sin.

In other words, rescue from the *guilt* of sin and the wrath of God had to precede rescue from the *power* of sin by the mercy of God. The crucial biblical words for saying this are: *Justification* precedes and secures *sanctification*. They are different. One is an instantaneous declaration (not guilty!); the other is an ongoing transformation.

Now, for those who are trusting Christ, the power of God is not in the service of his condemning wrath, but his liberating mercy. God gives us this power for change through the person of his Holy Spirit. That is why the beauty of “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” are called “the fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23). This is why the Bible can make the amazing promise: “Sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:14). Being “under grace” secures the omnipotent power of God to destroy our lovelessness (not all at once, but progressively). We are not passive in the defeat of our selfishness, but neither do we provide the decisive power. It is God’s grace. Hence the great apostle Paul said, “I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me” (1 Corinthians 15:10). May the God of all grace, by faith in Christ, free us from both the guilt and slavery of sin.

## TO FREE US FROM BONDAGE TO THE FEAR OF DEATH



*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood,  
he himself likewise partook of the same things,  
that through death he might destroy the one who has the  
power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who  
through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

Hebrews 2:14-15

Jesus called Satan a murderer. “He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth . . . he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). But his main interest is not killing. It is damning. In fact, he much prefers that his followers have long and happy lives—to mock suffering saints and hide the horrors of hell.

His power to damn human beings lies not in himself, but in the sins that he inspires and the lies that he tells. The only thing that damns anybody is unforgiven sin. Hexes, enchantments, voodoo, séances, curses, black magic, apparitions, voices—none of these casts a person into hell. They are the bells and whistles of the devil. The one lethal weapon he has is the power to deceive us. His chief lie is that self-exaltation is more to be desired than Christ-exaltation, and sin preferable to righteousness. If that weapon could be taken out of his hand, he would no longer have the power of eternal death.

That is what Christ came to do—take that weapon out of Satan’s hand. To do this, Christ took our sins on himself and suffered for them. When that happened, they could be used no more by the devil to destroy us. Taunt us? Yes. Mock us? Yes. But damn us? No. Christ bore the curse in our place. Try as he will, Satan cannot destroy us. The wrath of God is removed. His mercy is our shield. And Satan cannot succeed against us.

To accomplish this deliverance, Christ had to take on a human nature, because without it, he could not experience death. Only the death of the Son of God could destroy the one who had the power of death. Hence the Bible says, “Since . . . the children share in flesh and blood [=had a human nature], he himself likewise partook of the same things [=took on a human nature], that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). When Christ died for sins, he took from the devil his one lethal weapon: unforgiven sin.

Freedom from fear was the aim of Christ in doing this. By dying he delivered “all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery” (Hebrews 2:14). The fear of death enslaves. It makes us timid and dull. Jesus died to set us free. When the fear of death is destroyed by an act of self-sacrificing love, the bondage to boring, bigheaded self-preservation is broken. We are freed to love like Christ, even at the cost of our lives.

The devil may kill our body, but he can no longer kill our soul. It is safe in Christ. And even our mortal body will be raised someday: “He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you” (Romans 8:11). We are the freest of all people. And the Bible is unmistakable in what this freedom is for: “You were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13).