

## Freedom in Christ

John 8:34 (New American Standard Bible)

*Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly I say to you, **everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.***

Galatians 5:1, 13 (New American Standard Bible)

<sup>1</sup> *It was **for freedom** that Christ set us free; therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

<sup>13</sup> *For you were **called to freedom**, brothers and sisters; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.*

## Introduction

### God's Freedom Call

Before we met Christ, the Bible says, we were 'slaves,' 'prisoners,' 'captives,' and 'oppressed' (Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18-19, John 8:34, Romans 6:17). Do you agree?

Imagine you, a slave of sin, are standing before God along with a great multitude of other 'slaves.' God is seated high in His throne. In front of Him, a book is open. The Book of Life. An angel of God calls out your name, "(Your name)!" You respond, "Here." "You're free!" declares God, "Go into the eternal presence in Heaven." "Wow!" you say, "Who do I thank for this eternal freedom?" God says, "Christ My Son."

This is not just wild imagination. It is our spiritual reality. It has already happened to us. In Heaven. In God's eyes. It's a done deal. It's not an ordinary roll call. It's God's grace call for you. It's God's salvation call. It is God's freedom call for you. All through Christ our Lord. He called you to be free in Christ.

## Content

### Freedom in Christ

God wants you to be free. You may say, *I have never been a slave. I am a free man/woman.* Listen to Jesus in John 8:34. *Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly I say to you, **everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin** (John 8:34).* God wants us to be free in all

areas of life (body, soul, and spirit): free from sin, free from the fear of death, and free from oppressions of any form. We are going to mostly think about freedom from sin this morning.

In order to fully appreciate the freedom from sin, we must understand what sin is and how it separates us from God.

Few have the right understanding of sin and its negative impact on our relationship with God. For instance, many a people today think themselves *decent*, therefore, *not sinners*. “*I am fundamentally good by nature*,” they believe. “*My own goodness, therefore, will get me into Heaven*.” They consider the LORD God as Santa insisting that God should admit them into Heaven because they have been *good*. Folks, such a belief is not Christianity. It is not the Gospel. It is a heresy (a different teaching from that of Jesus). If our salvation depends on our own goodness and merits, Christ died for nothing.

Some folks believe that Christ didn’t have to die on the cross to save *them*. “*He might have to die for worst sinners*,” they reason, “*but not for me, because I am good*.” A wrong theology! A dangerous one, too. Listen.

Our faith in Jesus begins with the awareness of our sinfulness. Did you know that God’s Word declares that *all have sinned* (Romans 3:23)? That means, everyone is a sinner. You are a sinner. So am I. No matter how morally good we think we are, we are sinners before God. Period. Until we realize this spiritual reality, until we acknowledge such depravity in us, we can never become a true believer in Christ the Savior. No sinners to save, no Savior needed.

E.g. One time a man called Jesus ‘good teacher’ (Mark 10:17). *But Jesus said to him, “Why do you **call Me good**? No one is **good** except God alone”* (Mark 10:18). God alone is good that even Jesus humbly excluded Himself from being good. We all are sinners.

E.g. Consider Paul the Apostle. He was a righteous man before God. A Pharisee of Pharisees. He lived a flawless life in terms of keeping God’s Law. Yet, he called himself the chief sinner: *Jesus came into the world to save **sinners**, among whom I am foremost* (1 Timothy 1:15).

God’s Word declares that no matter how good we are, to God, *all our righteous deeds are like a **filthy** garment* (Isaiah 64:6). That’s who we are before God. Don’t get the Bible wrong. God’s Word never puts us down or makes us feel bad about ourselves but always points to the core of the Gospel: we all are under sin (Romans 3:9) and we need the Savior.

You may ask, *so Pastor Choi, what is sin?* I am glad you asked.

What is sin?

Sin is the inner state of our heart that appears in various forms of evil and wickedness outside. For example, killing someone innocent is a sin. Cheating on your spouse is a sin. Lying is a sin. Basically, any violation of the Ten Commandments is a sin. But such outcomes result from the depravity of our heart. Listen carefully. I am going to explain the basic nature of sin.

First, sin cannot co-exist with God's sovereignty. We are created in such a way that our heart must decide and declare its allegiance either to God or to self. Sin is a heart condition that declares our desire to be our own god. E.g. Remember the first temptation ever recorded in the Bible? The serpent tempted Eve to *be like God* (Genesis 3:5).

Sin is a declaration of independence from God. It is the rebellion that you reject the LORD as your God and refuse to obey Him. Instead, you follow your own will rather than God's will. That's sin. That's why even though you have never broken any law, even though you are morally upright, you are still a sinner before God **when** you are seated on the throne in your heart. All of us were like that before we surrendered ourselves to Christ.

Here's another truth about sin. By nature, it can never mix with God's holiness. Like oil and water. God and His holiness cannot stand any hint of sin, either. Anything impure or unclean has no place before the Holy God. E.g. *Holy Holy Holy is the LORD God Almighty* (Revelation 4:8), all creatures declare in heavenly worship. Everything in Heaven will be perfectly pure and completely free from sin, its ugliness or impurity.

Finally, consider the consequences of sins. The Bible calls it 'the wages of sin' (Romans 6:23), which is the second death. The first death, as you know, everyone goes through. We all die once. With no exception. Even Jesus died once. The second death, however, not all people suffer. Those who are born again in Christ will not suffer it (Revelation 2:11).

What is the second death?

It is the death that comes after we are resurrected from the dead. You see, on the last judgment, every person who ever existed will be resurrected and stand before God. We call this 'the White Throne Judgment' (Revelation 20:11-12). At that time, God will declare everyone's eternal destination based on what is written in one book: the Book of Life. Those whose names are found in the Book of Life will enter into the presence of God forever

and ever (Revelation 21:17). Those whose names are not recorded in the Book of Life will be thrown into the eternal fire—that's the second death (Revelation 20:14, 21:8).

Do not accuse God of cruelty, either for creating Hell or for sending some folks therein. On the contrary, God, who is love, wants no one in there. He loves every soul and wants them in Heaven instead: to come to know Him, to pledge their allegiance to Him, to walk in the light of the LORD, and to be in His presence by turning from evil ways (Acts 3:26). However, as you know, humanity rebelled against God over and over again and declared their independence from God and His sovereignty from the very beginning of history till now. Despite God's repeated call to come back to Him, humanity kept refusing to do so. So, God once tried to start a new race by wiping off the sinners from the face of the earth—the Great Flood (Noah). Well, did it work? Did the humanity return to God afterward? Not really. So, He finally came up with an idea: *What if I erase all sins, instead of people, from their hearts?*

His solution was this: Have someone take away sins from humanity. That someone must be perfect without sin. No human can do it. Not Noah. Not Abraham. Not even Moses. Because they too were sinners. Only one can do that mission. That was God Himself. So, God came into human flesh whose name was Jesus.

Christ came to earth for that very task. To wipe out and forgive us our sins. Once and for all. To liberate us from every type of oppression associated with sin; spiritual, emotional, and physical. To set us free from the second death and eternal punishment. All through His own death. We call this Atonement. Christ died on our behalf. He bought us from the slavery to sin with His own life.

The Bible says: In Christ, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins (Ephesians 1:7). In Christ, God has removed our sins as far as the East is from the West (Psalm 103:12). He remembers no more of our past iniquities (Hebrews 8:12). We are forgiven, and we are free from our sins. That's the heart of the Gospel we believe.

## **Conclusion**

Let me remind you one more time of our freedom in Christ.

<sup>1</sup>It was **for freedom** that Christ set us free; therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

<sup>13</sup>For you were **called to freedom**, brothers and sisters; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.

You are no longer to a slave to sin (Romans 6:6). You are free in Christ. Use your freedom to serve God and others through love. Amen.

