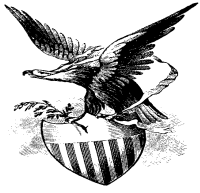


# Light Brings Salt

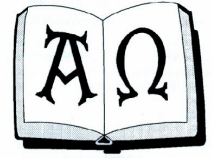
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## Iron Range Bible Church

Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the  
Word of God



### *Our Freedom in Christ*

by Pastor John Griffith

As we have just noted in our recent study of Romans 6 many important provisions grow out of who we are as new creation Christians. And if we apply these provisions in our life, and realize the objectives that God desires for us through them, what we are really doing is glorifying God not ourselves.

Christian freedom flows out of our "newness" in Christ that is our new position and the resources that we have in Christ.

Paul considered freedom as one of the most significant results of Christ's redemptive work for the Christian, and he was very concerned that the Christian not fall prey to some yoke of bondage imposed by people, particularly the "Judaizers," the legalists of the day as we noted in our study of Galatians. (Gal. 5:1)

The Christian's only bondage is to God through Jesus Christ and to righteousness as we present ourselves for service to Him daily.

Unfortunately, many believers out in Christendom are confused over the nature of Christian freedom. An examination of the New Testament passages where the concepts of freedom are dealt with leads to the conclusion that Christian freedom is based on three things.

#### **First, Christian freedom is based on the work of Christ on the cross.**

Two passages are particularly relevant to this facet of freedom: John 8:36 and Galatians 5:1.

In John 8 Jesus confronts Jews who had believed what he had taught up to this point

(8:31). He warned them that they must continue in the truth he was teaching if they were to become free from their bondage to sin (v. 34).

Unless Christ set them free they would not continue in the Father's house forever (i.e., have eternal life). The Jews were insulted and retorted that they had never been in any bondage to any person (v. 33).

Of course, Israel had been in military bondage to the surrounding empires since the sixth century B.C. and were at the time in bondage to Rome. Their point was that they were a "free" people on the inside even if they were a subjugated nation on the outside.

During Jesus' extended confrontation with this group in John 8, he challenges the notion whether they were truly free on the inside. Jesus contended that they were not free on the inside either since they were murderous in their intent toward him. And this murderous intent was externalized when the Jews took up stones to kill him for blasphemy (v. 58).

They understood that what He said in vs:58 spoke of His eternal preexistence and rightly could only be spoken of God and they considered it blasphemy that He had said this of Himself so they took up stones to kill Him.

Paul's development of this internal bondage to sin is found primarily in the books of Romans and Galatians. In Romans 6 Paul teaches that Christ has freed us from bondage to sin through being identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

By believing the gospel, the Roman Christians had been freed from sin and were now to be

enslaved to righteousness (6:18) that is **what is right, just, good and** is consistent with God's will for us. This righteousness is experiential not imputed righteousness and therefore flows from what is produced in the life that is **all that is** classified as good, from God's viewpoint, that is, what is consistent with God's will. Romans 6:16 links this righteousness to obedience to the will of God.

Our responsibility is to consider, count (logizomai) the freedom we have through Christ's atoning work as a fact, as true (6:11), and to implement in our lives the reality of our freedom by presenting our members (body functions) to righteousness (6:13, 19).

In Galatians 5 as we have studied Paul makes another plea to the Galatians that they not return to the bondage that characterized their pre-Christian lives by getting entangled in a new yoke of Jewish bondage. That is falling prey to the baggage of the Judaizers, the legalists. The Galatians needed to choose whether they would align themselves with the line of bondage or the line of freedom.

The line of bondage was represented by Hagar, Ishmael, Sinai, the old covenant, the present earthly Jerusalem, and Jews.

The line of freedom was represented by Sarah, Isaac, the new covenant, the future heavenly Jerusalem, and Christians.

Without question those who believe in Christ have been rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred each one into the kingdom (rule and reign) of His beloved Son, (Col. 1:13) that is from the line of bondage to the line of freedom.

This was especially important for Jewish Christians to realize that they were now in a completely new status, new relationship with God and that they needed to leave behind the baggage from their former practice under apostate Judaism of the day.

The Galatians were to hold firm to their new status in Christ and not become entangled again in a yoke of bondage.

Any submission to Jewish forms such as circumcision, special days, months, weeks, (4:10) would negate the death of Christ (2:21).

The death of Christ, therefore, is the only basis whereby the sin nature that we have can be handled by the new life in the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-17; Gal. 5:16-26).

What we learned in Rom. 6:1-10 points out, here is the positional aspect, you've died to the sin nature, you've been separated from its power, that provision has been made and in Romans 6:11f, 8:1-17 and Gal 5:16-26 we have the mechanics for maintaining the reality of this separation in our life each day, moment by moment.

Paul is very emphatic as he speaks about our position by using the indicative mood which points out the reality of what he is communicating. Then as he shifts to our responsibility related to putting this truth into shoe leather in our lives, into the experience of the day, he uses the imperative mood. This points out the areas that we need to make decisions about. An example of this is found in Romans 6:11-13 where we find 4 important imperatives.

### **Second, Christian freedom is based on the truth (John 8:32).**

The Apostle John's emphasis on truth is extensive (see John 1:14, 17; 3:21; 4:23-24; 5:33; 8:32, 40, 44, 45, 46; 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:13; 17:17, 19; 18:37; 1 John 1:6, 8; 2:4, 21; 3:18, 19; 4:6; 5:6; 2 John 1, 2, 3, 4; 3 John 1, 3, 4, 8, 12).

A consideration of these passages shows that truth is a major part of the new relationship that we have with Jesus Christ.

Truth is personalized in the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Jesus in John 1:14, 17; and the Holy Spirit in John 14:17; 15:26

These two (Jesus, Holy Spirit) reveal the truth to believers so that we might be able to live in truth. The new relationship does not concentrate on externals as its main focus but is concerned with worship in the realm of Spirit and truth (John 4:23-24).

For Paul, Christians are **not** to live according to the old pattern of malice and wickedness but according to the new pattern of integrity and truth (1 Cor. 5:8), and a characteristic of Christian love is that it rejoices in truth (1 Cor. 13:6).

Paul's ministry as an apostle, as a servant, is a presentation of the truth (2 Cor. 4:2). Not in twisting and distorting the Word to one's own ends.

His concern for the Galatians was that they were exchanging truth for error (Gal. 2:5; 5:7).

The new man has been created by God in righteousness and holiness produced by the truth (Eph. 4:24).

The truth frees one from a bondage to asceticism (1 Tim. 4:3) and results in godliness (Titus 1:1).

### **Third, Christian freedom is based on the work of the Holy Spirit.**

The Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17) who indwells us, illuminates the Word for us and through it leads us. The Spirit sets us free from the bondage to sin and to a life of fulfilling the righteous requirements of the law (Rom. 8:2,4).

As the greatest gift in the new dispensation of the Church, the Spirit produces freedom, which transforms the believer from glory unto glory (2 Cor. 3:17-18).

Yet this Christian freedom is neither unstructured nor free from all restraints and limitations. God lays out the parameters for freedom, for our life lived day by day. There are parameters established and they are called the will of God. And obedience to the will of God is in no way legalism.

Children often believe that they will experience true freedom when they are free from parental control and can do anything they please.

Actually, they fall prey to even greater bondage when they have this so-called freedom, especially when they experience

drug addiction, STD'S, bankruptcy, arrest, loss of self-respect, and many other things.

Total freedom, then, is actually a new form of bondage. Structure gives most people a sense of order and thus of security and purpose in their lives.

True freedom is built on what Jesus Christ has done in transferring people from the bondage to sin to the freedom of slavery to righteousness.

This freedom is the freedom to implement what God has revealed about the truth as it is embodied in Jesus Christ and is what the Holy Spirit does as He reveals this truth and as we live this truth what results is that we will reflect the character of Christ.

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### **Profiles of valor: Marine Corps Maj. Douglas Zembiec**

He is remembered as the "Lion of Fallujah," a leader who took many risks in order to save the lives of others. Then-Marine Capt. Douglas Zembiec, a Naval Academy graduate born in Hawaii, served with Echo Company in war-torn Fallujah, where he and his men helped quell violence that rocked the city for some time.

During one skirmish, Zembiec's team was providing back-up support for another Marine patrol that had encountered heavy insurgent fire. Zembiec led his men directly into the assault, where they encountered AK-47 and RPG fire. The Marines radioed for a nearby tank to open fire, but received no response to their repeated requests for aid. Zembiec left his position on a rooftop, and ran out into the fray. Remarkably, he made it safely to the tank and directed its operators where to fire. The enemy were summarily dispatched.

Not long after that incident, Zembiec's platoon was assaulted by insurgent fire from three sides, with only 20 feet of space between the platoon's position and the insurgents. Zembiec was wounded by shrapnel, but continued to direct platoon fire and the evacuation of the wounded.

Zembiec, 34, was later killed in the line of duty while serving in Baghdad. He left behind his wife of two years and a one-year-old daughter. "I was with your son in Fallujah," a Marine once told Zembiec's father. "He was my company commander. If we had to go back in there, I would follow him with a spoon." For his efforts in Fallujah, Zembiec was awarded the Bronze Star with combat "V" for valor.