

The Perfect and Complete Assurance that Every Situation in my life is going to turn out both splendid and bright 03 From Glory to Glory

Read 2 Cor 3.15-17. This is what we looked at last week – we found out that when you read the law, your heart is covered with a veil, and when you turn to Jesus, that veil is taken away and the glory starts to flow out of you.

Then verse 17 tells us that the Lord Jesus is the spirit that is inside us. Now the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus are two separate persons, but there is only one God! So, when Jesus is sitting in Heaven, resting in His body, at the same time, in the spirit He is in us! And where He is – there is always freedom.

The Greek word for freedom is eleutheria, and it means a double freedom – it means having the power to do something as well as the power not to do it. As Christians we have the freedom to do whatever we want, but we are also free not to do things too! Now if your freedom has two sides, it is good and wise to stay in the middle of the road, as there will be a ditch on both sides. A lot of people drive too close to the edge of the road, and they end up in a mess.

You have the freedom not to end up in a mess, Jesus has set you free! You can choose whatever you want to do, but do not be deceived – some choices are better than other choices. You are free – but do not use your freedom as an excuse to make bad choices. Instead, let us use our freedom to make our community the most loving and wonderful and kind community in the world.

Right now, Jesus is Lord, He is inside you, the hope of glory, and therefore you are standing right now in freedom. You are not entangled or bound by anything – not your behaviour, not your past, not anything. You need to stop looking at the law and start looking at Jesus and the more you look at Jesus the more your freedom will manifest.

Today, I want us to look at two double freedoms we have. Firstly, we have the freedom from the opinions and standards of others. We are free from the opinions and standards of others, but we are also equally free to listen to and appreciate the opinions of others. Either way we should not be using our freedoms against one another.

Read 1 Cor. 10.25-29. One of the greatest things about being a new creation, full of glory, is that no-one else's opinion of you matters. You are free. You are free to eat what you want. You can eat kosher, halal, vegan, meat, this that or the other. You are free to eat whatever you want. What do you want for breakfast? Free to eat it. What do you want for lunch? Free to eat that. You want to eat with someone who is not a Christian, go and do it. You want to eat with sinners, go and do it. It's not a problem. Eat whatever you want with them.

But, on the other hand, if what you eat upsets someone else and damages them – you are free not to eat it. You are not dominated by food. You are free not to eat it and put a human being above your dinner.

We are free from being controlled by others but let us not use that freedom to just annoy people, but rather let us respect the conscience of others. We all have different consciences! But the church needs to rise above that and start loving people no matter what and taking care of each other.

There are certain things I will not eat or drink in front of others because they matter to me. I am free to eat and drink anything, but I will not use my freedom to damage someone else. This is important with not just eating and drinking, but other issues too, especially during this season of lockdown and certain restrictions. We are free but let us not abuse our freedom in a way that upsets people.

Again, there is a limit on the other side too – I will do what I can not to damage your conscience but at the end of the day, some things matter. I will not stop planting churches or living for Jesus if that upsets you. But if you are happier if I put a mask on, do not bacon in front of you, or do not drink a beer while you are with me, that is fine by me. Those things matter a lot less than people!

On any issue of conscience, not a right or wrong issue, but a matter of conscience there will be some who are stricter and some who are looser. That is fine – but if you are on the looser side of the line, do not push it in other people's faces, do not try and hurt and damage people, do not try and push people to violate their own consciences!

This is about the glory of God – remember in the book of Acts they were all in one accord in one place and the glory manifest. Now the glory is inside us, but it is released when we stop fussing about minor issues and turn to Jesus and accept people the way they are like Jesus does.

Jesus nailed the law to the cross and took it down to hell with Him. Do not go back to hell to drag the law up and use it against your own family in Christ. We are free from each other's opinions – if you know God has called you to do something, do it. But if it really doesn't matter, you are just as free to respect other people's opinions and conscience. But let's not use our freedom to judge others and put them down.

Read Galatians 2.4. Sadly, there will always be people who want to make you a slave – they will even come to church and pretend to be Christians to make you a slave to the law again. We have had this in Tree of Life several times; people come in, and try and say something like: "Well, this grace teaching is nice and all, but Ben does not know that we must develop our human spirit" and then after that they give people laws to obey. We even had a case where one of our elders was phoning people up and telling them to dress better to come to church. That is not true, you are free!

The amount of people who want to put a burden on people they will never lift themselves never fails to surprise me. There are two kinds of false teachers in the New Testament and they both attack our freedoms. The Galatians had false teachers that attacked our freedom from the law, our freedom from ritual, and those false teachers tried to make people get circumcised and obey the laws of Moses again – and told them they would not be blessed unless they did. That is false teaching.

Read Galatians 5.1-4. We must not get tied up again in slavery to the law. The law will entangle you and trap you and condemn you and beat you up. And the biggest problem with the law, and most Christians do not realize this, is that if you start to rely on the law, even a little bit, Christ becomes useless to you. You cannot look at Moses and Christ at the same time, they are in opposite directions.

If you rely on any one of the laws of Moses, you must rely on all of them. If you rely on your ability to obey one law to be right with God, you are in trouble. You cannot rely on your behaviour; you must rely on the behaviour of Jesus Christ.

If you rely on your goodness, you will be cut off from Christ. That could not be clearer, and it could not be more strongly stated. The word for cut off in Greek is katargeo, and it is a very strong word – it means to chop off an arm or leg, it means to remove all the power from someone or something, it means to fire someone then make sure they will never work again.

**LISTEN TO ME SO CLEARLY – because MOST PEOPLE DO NOT GRASP THE IMPORT OF THIS, the VITAL NEED TO UNDERSTAND THIS.** This is the most forceful language Paul can use. **IF YOU ARE TRYING TO MAKE YOURSELF RIGHT WITH GOD BY YOUR BEHAVIOUR, YOU ARE MAKING CHRIST UNEMPLOYED, YOU ARE ACTING LIKE YOU HAVE NO SAVIOUR, YOU ARE CUTTING HIM OFF FROM YOU, YOU ARE ENDING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM, YOU ARE TAKING ALL HIS POWER AWAY.**

The kingdom of God is a perfect kingdom, full of blessings, and perfection and glory. **IT SHINES LIKE THE SUN**, it is a wondrous place where sickness melts away, and poverty does not exist, and we are kind and loving and sweet all the time. That is somewhere we can live every single day of our life.

Moses built a bridge to the kingdom of God, and that bridge is called the law of Moses. It is a bridge with 613 planks of wood. If you step correctly on each of the 613 laws, you can get into the kingdom and enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of God.

You can be glorious in your life, in your family, in your house, in your church, in your ministry, in your career. You can live a life of glory, a blessed life. But here is the catch, if you break any one of these rather flimsy planks, the whole bridge falls apart, and you crash. The entire bridge breaks! Read James 2.10. If you break any law, you break the entire bridge and it cannot be used.

Just for reference, here are some of the laws of Moses, some of the planks of this bridge;

- So, every man must be circumcised
- And clean shaven, that is in there.
- No tattoos.
- Have you said your prayers twice a day today? The ones in the Bible. Also, have you offered two lambs today? That's a daily requirement in the law.
- Did you put your phylacteries on today? (the prayer box that goes on your arm)
- Did you fast last Yom Kippur, are you going to fast on the next one, do you even know when it is – if I tell you, you might keep it and think you are doing well, it's Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> September, but fast from sunset Wed)
- Did you explain to your children the meaning of Passover on the first night of Passover this year (it was March you missed it)

- Were you born when your parents were not married, if so you can never keep the Law.
- Have you only ever eaten kosher food? Ever eaten pig, sirloin steak – it's from the hindquarters, prawns, oysters, lobster and crab?
- Ever made a promise and not kept it?
- Ever sinned by accident and only afterwards found out that was sinful behaviour.
- Ever desired someone else's possession?
- Ever embarrassed someone else? That's in there – Lev. 19.
- Do you pay all your employee's daily what they earned that day?
- Have you ever said anything bad about your mum or dad?

There is 613 of these planks, and if you break one, the entire bridge breaks. YOU CANNOT USE THIS BRIDGE. If you think you can, you need mental help.

Thankfully, Jesus built a new bridge. This bridge is made out of two planks of wood, only two. The first plank is called grace. That grace means that in His love for you, Jesus died in your place and took the punishment that was due you, was made sin with your sin, and took your shame and sickness and the entire curse of the law, then He made you righteous, blessed and glorious!

The second plank is called faith. You believe in the grace and you receive all the grace. It is that simple. Just accept it and you pass into the kingdom and you have it all.

Now that second bridge is a lot easier than the first. And it was built at the cost of the life of Jesus Christ Himself, not just physical death, but He became sin with the sin of all of us. And all you have to do to enter the kingdom of God and live in glory and the blessing of Abraham is simply believe what Jesus did on the cross.

So, why would anyone ever under any circumstances, for any reason, ever choose the first bridge, the old bridge, the obsolete bridge. But there are false teachers trying to get you off bridge two, the Jesus bridge, and turn your eyes back to Moses! Reject these false teachers and keep walking by faith in the grace of God.

The second type of false teachers attack our freedom to be free from sin and death. Read 2 Peter 2.17-20. They are very common in grace churches sadly, they turn up and say – “You are not under law, so sin some more”. The problem is that if you keep sinning you will end up in a worse life than when you got saved. I have met these people – and their life is a mess. But they sound good, and people love listening to them because some people love their sin, and love living a low level of life.

One example is finances. The extreme at one side of the road is to only give out of fear and condemnation, to only tithe out of fear. The extreme at the other side of the road is to never give and spend all your money on yourself and never be generous. Both lead to a messed-up life. We are free from the law, free from condemnation, free to do what we want with our own money. But we are also free to make a much better decision. We are free to honour the Lord with the firstfruits, to honour the Lord with our tithe, to be cheerful, happy, bold, strong, holy givers. To enter the amazing joy of giving.

Some people are free from the law but now trapped by their tight, stingy, mean flesh and are just as trapped! We need to think of the two powerful statements that Jesus gave the woman caught in adultery. The first statement is “Neither do I condemn you”. That is powerful – this woman did something sinful, selfish, destructive. She did not care for

one second about her marriage vows, her promises, her covenant with her husband. She behaved terribly. But Jesus did not condemn her, he did not write her off, He did not hate her. He loved her and refused to judge her.

YOU ARE FREE FROM BEING USELESS, even if in your past you slept with another woman's husband, another man's wife, and you broke a holy covenant, the first covenant ever made between two people, YOU CAN BE FREE FROM BEING USELESS, YOU CAN STILL BE USED, STILL BE GLORIOUS, STILL WALK IN VICTORY.

That is a great freedom, but we have a double freedom. Jesus then said, "Go and sin no more". You are also free from sin! You do not need to go and find your value in immoral sex, you can be pure, you can wait until marriage, you can live in victory, you can stop using pornography, you can be free from all the drama and pain that such a destructive lifestyle brings. Free from being tangled up and enslaved and worse off than before.

Jesus gave this woman a double freedom. We should enjoy both. Listen, whatever you have done, I do not condemn you and Jesus does not condemn you. No one is useless, no one does not have a glorious future, a future of glory, victory and peace.

But you are also free from sinning. You are free to do it right, to dream of showing people more respect and honour than ever before. When you understand the road of freedom, and stay away from the ditches on both sides, you live a life that moves forward, that progresses and that is where the glory manifests.

YOU ARE FREE. Totally free. Free from all the demands of the law, free from all your sin and death. So, do not use that freedom to do what you want on a selfish level. Now go and love people, take risks, step out in faith, go to Heal the Nations, tithe, help someone who does appreciate it, or appreciate you.

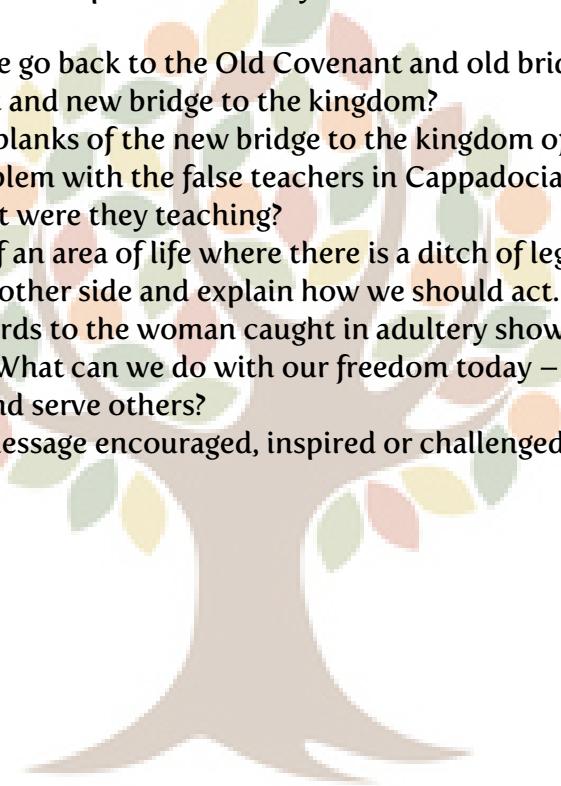
The NEW COVENANT IS NOT A COVENANT OF SLAVERY, it is NOT A COVENANT OF OBLIGATION – it is a COVENANT OF FREEDOM. IT IS A COVENANT OF LIBERTY. IT IS A COVENANT WHERE YOU ARE COMPLETE – YOU ARE NOT LACKING ANYTHING.

YOU ARE FREE – but do not use your freedom in a wrong way. Read I Peter 2.16. This sums up everything said today, meditate on this verse, take it to heart, and use your freedom to do something glorious.

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*where dreams come true*

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- I. What does the word freedom mean?
2. Have you ever felt trapped by the opinions of others? What happened?
3. Ben says that “we are free but let us not abuse our freedom in a way that upsets people.” In what ways can we abuse our freedom and upset other people?
4. What was the problem with the false teachers in Galatia? What were they teaching that was wrong?
5. What is the problem on relying on any one of the laws of Moses as our way into the blessings of the kingdom?
6. Have you ever tried to impress God with your behaviour? How did that turn out for you?
7. Why would anyone go back to the Old Covenant and old bridge rather than use the New Covenant and new bridge to the kingdom?
8. What are the two planks of the new bridge to the kingdom of God?
9. What was the problem with the false teachers in Cappadocia? (That 2 Peter was referring to). What were they teaching?
10. Give an example of an area of life where there is a ditch of legalism and a ditch of selfishness on the other side and explain how we should act.
- II. How can Jesus’ words to the woman caught in adultery show our double freedom?
12. Read I Peter 2.16. What can we do with our freedom today – how can we use our freedom to help and serve others?
13. What about this message encouraged, inspired or challenged you the most?



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