

Our Christian Faith



Holy

Yahweh

Hell

Law

Preservation

REDEMPTION

With good reason, slavery is a touchy subject for most people. For us here in America, it brings up all kinds of conflicting thoughts and emotions. We think of the deplorable role that slavery played in our national past--the horrific abuse of people and the hypocrisy of subjugating some to forced labor while simultaneously declaring "all men are created equal." Equally tragic and heart-wrenching is modern day human trafficking where helpless and desperate individuals are used for illegal labor and sex slavery. It's all so ugly and saddening that you can't think on it too long or it will make you sick to your stomach.

But there is another kind of slavery out there that is more sordid, dark, and deadly than those already mentioned. A slavery of which subjugation based on skin color and human trafficking are only symptoms. It's so far-reaching that every one of us was born enslaved¹ and a system so locked up that NO ONE can escape on their own.² Yet despite the constant oppression, pain, and tyranny we endure, no one wants to talk about it either. It's so much easier for us to pretend it doesn't exist. Of course, what I'm describing is our slavery to sin.

The Bible says that since the fall into sin, we humans are now born in the sin-broken image of Adam³ and as a result, all that we think, say, and do is turned away from God and towards ourselves and the very inclinations and attitudes of our hearts are only evil all the time.⁴ As such, we are bound by sin, spiritually dead, and altogether deserving and destined for physical and eternal death. It is an enslavement so complete that even the awareness of it, doesn't change our condition in the least. On second thought, perhaps it's no wonder then that no one likes or wants to talk about it, because we are so hopelessly and helplessly trapped. So we would have remained had the good, gracious, and merciful God not intervened and sent his only Son to redeem us. Thus far in this devotion we've been using the illustration of slavery to describe our sinful condition because the word "redemption" means "to pay the price to set a slave free."

Before the world ever existed, God foresaw that because of our own evil decisions humanity would be bound by sin, under the devil's control, and headed for eternal death. Although our lot was entirely deserved, he loved us too much to sit back and watch us go to our own self-destruction. So he decided to buy us from this empty way of life and make us his own, and the price he paid was the precious blood of his innocent Son, whom the Apostle Peter describes as a lamb without blemish or defect.⁵ The liquid rubies that dripped from Christ's veins during his beatings, scourging, and crucifixion are of incalculable worth--more than all gold and silver and all the universe combined.⁶

At the cross Jesus willingly paid the bitter price to free us from the power and the guilt and the eternal punishment of our sin. For that reason, Paul says we are no longer our own; we have been bought by God at a price,⁷ and therefore our freedom is not to do to what we want or to indulge our sinful nature, but rather, we

¹ Psalm 51:5.

² John 8:34-36.

³ Genesis 5:3; Romans 5:12-14; 1 Corinthians 15:49.

⁴ Genesis 6:5; 8:21.

⁵ 1 Peter 1:18.

⁶ Ibid.; Revelation 5:9.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 6:20.

are now free to resist temptation and sin and honor God with our thoughts, our mouths, and our bodies.⁸ Belonging to the Lord of the universe and knowing how precious we are to him sets us free from the bondage of lust, power, pleasure, greed, and status. Redeemed by Jesus the people of God are now at liberty to begin being what he originally designed us to be: his glad, holy, joyful, obedient children.⁹ Now, to be sure we daily wrestle with the temptation to return to the sin slavery that we knew, and yes, the chains and shackles lying on the floor around our feet still too often trip us up. But our new identity is redeemed and washed clean in the blood of Jesus. Love the Lord who has bought you, and live in the REAL freedom that is found only in doing his will from an unbounded heart,¹⁰ until the day comes when God will permanently set you free from this world of sin, sorrow, and death and bring you into the glorious freedom of the children of God.¹¹

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- 1.) Redeemed by Christ, we Christians have two natures inside of us—our sinful flesh and our freed new man. Define “freedom” according to each of these natures. How is the “freedom” that the sinful nature pursues a most diabolical form of slavery? Use this spiritual insight in your personal battles against temptation.
- 2.) By nature, no one who is unredeemed wants to discuss their slavery to sin. How might we share this truth with them in ways that are personal, practical, patient, and loving and finally point them to the redemption won by Jesus?

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, I confess that I was once a lost and condemned creature, under the control of sin, and helplessly headed for death. I cannot thank you enough for shedding your blood and laying down your life to redeem me and set me free from sin's curse and power! May the rest of my days be dedicated to your service and praise for the freedom and eternal life you have won for me! Amen.

(With Pastor leading a group of teens to the WELS Youth Rally next week and VBS the following week, our audio devotions will resume again on July 29th.)

⁸ Galatians 5:13; Romans 6:11-14,18-19,22.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Psalm 119:32.

¹¹ Romans 8:21.