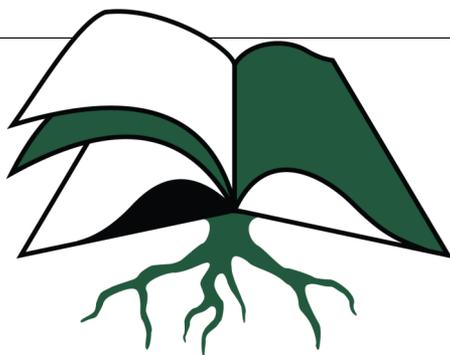


Pennsylvania Bible Teaching Fellowship

Fall Newsletter



This quarterly newsletter is written to enhearten, encourage and inspire so that the Word of God may continue to grow and increase both in quantity and quality in the hearts of God's beloved.

*...receive with meekness the implanted Word,
which is able to save [deliver] your souls.*

James 1:21b WT



**FALL
2018**

FREE INDEED

By Shawn Weir

“For Freedom!” has always been a strong rally cry for man. Freedom often comes at great cost and men will fight hard to obtain even the smallest bit of it. All throughout human history, there have been tyrants, but the greatest bondage of man never came from the likes of a king, emperor, or dictator.

The greatest oppressor of man was and still is sin. Sin puts men in punishing slavery with no way to escape its cruelty. By our own efforts, none of us are able to overthrow its tyranny.

**Deliverance from the authority of sin
is the greatest reason to cry:
“For Freedom!”**

Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke of this freedom and he knew the horrible cost to obtain it. The liberty that he secured for all of mankind exceeds the greatest dethroning of any worldly tyrant. Jesus Christ came to deliver from the true bondage reigning over mankind.

Jesus Christ came to make men free indeed.

He spoke of these matters in **John 8:**



John 8:31 - 36

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

The audience at this time is a mixed crowd of some who believed and others who were so incensed with his teaching that by the end of the chapter they will attempt to stone him. His promise was to those who continued (*menō*: to abide, to remain, to take up residence) in his word that they are his disciples (*mathētēs*: learners or pupils) truly. He then continues to promise unto them, that they would know THE truth, and that THE truth would make them free.

His ardent opponents balked at this offer of true freedom. They claimed to never have been in bondage... which is as absurd as offering a life preserver to a duck. Had the children of Israel ever been in bondage?

Hmmm, let's see if we can think of any times that the children of Israel were in captivity...

Go on, I'll give you a minute.



FREE INDEED

- Well... there was that one time the children of Israel were under Pharaoh in bondage in Egypt for a couple years...
- Then, of course, was the time of the judges when they had that repeating cycle of finding themselves in bondage until a deliverer like Samson, Gideon, or Deborah arose...
- Not to mention, later the ten northern tribes were carried away by the Assyrians; and the southern tribes of Judea were carried away to Babylon....
- I hate to bring it up, but after that, they were under the Persians...
- And even at the time of making this ludicrous statement, they were under the bondage of Caesar and the Romans...

However, Jesus Christ doesn't even engage with them on this level. He wasn't interested in winning a debate with these questioners. He wanted to bring them to freedom. Jesus wasn't talking about being in bondage under men. He was talking about being enslaved under a far greater oppressor.

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

The word for “servant” that our Lord used here is the Greek word *doulos*, which is a bonds slave.



FREE INDEED

A slave's life is not his own but belongs entirely to his master. The word for "sin" in this passage is indicating a habitual, constant action of sinning. The freedom indeed that Jesus Christ was promising to those who continued in his word was from the continual oppression of slavery under the bondage of sin.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Other oppressors in history have been overthrown, and liberations of those held captive have occurred, but how could a man free himself from the bondage of sin? The problem wasn't a tyrant *over* me, but one *in* me. How could we escape from ourselves? Praise be to God on high that He so loved that He sent not a servant but His Own Son. His Son who abides in His house forever has brought us into His household. God has made us sons, made free from all sin, to abide in His house forever.

**If the Son of God has made you free,
then rest assured, you are free indeed.**

As a modern English reader, another wonderful key to our freedom is found in appreciating the difference between being *set* free and being *made* free.



FREE INDEED

Suppose you were imprisoned and I snuck a file into your jail cell. Say at night you went to work on the bars on your window and you were able to sneak out before dawn and meet me in a getaway car out back. As we drove away; and you took your first breaths of freedom while watching the sun dawn, would you say that I *made* you free or that I *set* you free?

In that scenario, you would still be a convict, still guilty of your crimes and still rightly belonging in that prison. In fact, in helping you escape, I now also broke the laws of justice and belong in jail along with you. Jesus Christ didn't come to *set* us free; he has *made* us free from sin. You've been made into something that you were not before. A change has occurred inside you. He fulfilled all justice. You have become something entirely new and truly free.

Colossians 2:13b – 14 ESV

13b having forgiven us all our trespasses,
14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

God's righteous justice has been satisfied. All of our trespasses, every decree against us, every single sin that we ever committed has been nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ. Our criminal record is cleared. Our rap sheets are white blank pages. God the righteous judge has declared: "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more..." (**Hebrews 10:17**)



Colossians 1:21 – 22

21 And you, that were sometime (once) alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight

This is how you are now seen by the most high and holy God. His standards for perfection, holiness, and righteousness are the highest possible. What Jesus Christ has done has so cleansed you that before the eyes of God you are now and forever holy, unblameable, and unproveable.

- **Holy**(*hagios*): sacred, sanctified and consecrated. You are set apart from the common people as holy unto God.
- **Unblameable**(*amōmos*): without defects, without faults. God doesn't acknowledge flaws in you.
- **Unproveable**(*anegklētos*): irrefutable, unimpeachable, unaccusable. You are unworthy to be blamed even when blamed. God won't even hear an accusation against you.

Jesus Christ made me justified. In Christ, I'm innocent and I can't be guilty ever again. This is how all-encompassing the grace and justice of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is for your life.

**You can never be less than
righteous before God.**



FREE INDEED

Please also note that none of these verses have mentioned how you feel today. This is the truth of God's Word, unchanged and unchanging. Yet, believing on the truth has done even more than this. More than only washing away our prior sins and reconciling us as sacred, without fault and not accusable in God's sight, the son has *made* us free from the slavery of sin.

In order to bring us this freedom from our old oppressor, God didn't rescue us by relocating us. The problem was *in* us. How could we get away from that? No, God fixed the problem by changing us within. How big of a change? As extreme as death unto life.

Romans 6:6 – 14, 18, 20 - 22

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed (justified) from sin.

Jesus Christ was clear in **John 8** about the bondage of the slavery of sin. The truth would make men freed indeed from its heavy yoke. We see how we've been made justified from it here, by dying with Jesus Christ. They don't keep dead people in jail cells.

You were crucified with Christ:
nevertheless you live...



FREE INDEED

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:11 is the first command in the first epistle of the New Testament. Becoming a Christian involves believing that the Lord Jesus Christ died and that God raised him from the dead. To live as a Christian the first command to believe is that you also died and that God also raised you from the dead with him. As we saw in **verse 6**, the goal of this death and resurrection was so that “henceforth we should not serve sin.” Again, that word for “serve” is *douleuō*: a bonds slave. We are no longer slaves under the oppression of sin.

However, history shows us a funny thing with tyrants: even when overthrown and liberation occurs, some may still stay loyal to their former oppressors. At first, those recently freed don’t know any other way to live. They aren’t used to serving any other master.



FREE INDEED

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

You've passed from death unto life. You are no longer subjugated under sin and you no longer need to obey it. Instead, you are now to present yourself unto God, having passed from the cruel reign of sin and death into the freedom of the arrangement under grace and righteousness. The word for dominion in **verse 14** is *kurieuō*, and it means to "exercise authority over." The cognate noun of this word is "lord." Sin is no longer your lord and you are no longer under its lordship. God gave you a new life, a new start, and a new Lord.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants (*donloō*: bondslaves) of righteousness.

We weren't just *set* free. We were *made* free. Now with the same bodies, we obey a new master. If we ever look back at the old fascist reign of sin over us, let's remember it in light of these verses:



FREE INDEED

20 For when ye were the servants (*douloō*: bondslaves) of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

The ironic mention of freedom from righteousness in **verse 20** should rightly catch our eye. What fruit did we ever enjoy under the old regime? Why would we ever crawl back under it? Why would a Christian now freed from sin ever go back to the slavery under it? A Christian is not a man who has become free to return to sin, but a man, who, by the grace of God, has become free to not sin.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants (*douloō*: bondslaves) to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

We are made free from sin; from the stain of it, from the bondage of it, and from the power of it. “For Freedom!” we may cry in praises to our God, for the Christian life is a life of true liberty. This was why it said in **Isaiah 61** that the LORD anointed him:

“...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

If the Son therefore shall make you free,
ye shall be free indeed.



UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>Event</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Details</u>
New Year's Eve Fellowship	<u>December 31st</u>	An evening of sweet fellowship with the saints in the Community Room at Messiah Village. We'll have a dinner together and afterwards get into God's Word. Please bring a dish to share. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Area Fellowship	<u>January 27th</u>	In the Community Room at Messiah Village. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Youth Day in God's Word and Area Fellowship	<u>February 10th</u>	A day for children who want to learn more about God and His Word. An Area Fellowship will be available in the morning. The entire day will be at the Grantville Holiday Inn.
Area Fellowship	<u>March 10th</u>	In the Community Room at Messiah Village. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Area Fellowship	<u>April 7th</u>	In the Community Room at Messiah Village. A Children's Fellowship will be available.
Day in God's Word	<u>April 13th</u>	A entire day of teaching's from God's Word. The event will be at Messiah Village.

Pennsylvania Bible Teaching Fellowship
701 Alison Avenue
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Phone: 267-261-2259
Fax: 717-766-2695
Email: pabible@pabibletf.org
www.pabibletf.org