

The Corona Chronicle

West Worthing Evangelical Church Rugby Road.

Sunday August 16th

www.westworthingevangelical.co.uk

Being Church while the Corona Virus emergency is

Galatians 5:1

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

We have been set free.

Terry Waite in his book 'Taken on Trust' describes being chained to the wall and only allowed to go to the bathroom once a day.

He was chained to a radiator for 1763 days, almost four years. We can only imagine the sense of freedom he has now.

But imagine that after he was released he was walking past the building where he had been held and one of his captors calls him over.

The man says 'Mr Waite won't you come back into captivity again? We will give you a new set of handcuffs, a new chain, a new room and a new radiator to be chained to.' Would Terry Waite go back?

No of course he wouldn't. Would you? Now why would I ask such a question? Simple really – most people I know have done exactly that.

Paul says in Galatians 5 verse 1 'It is for freedom Christ has set you free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery'

BUT CHRISTIANS

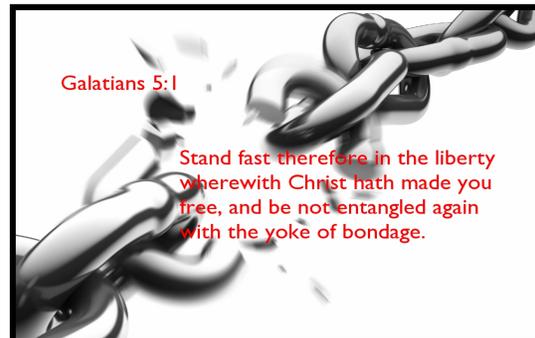
I see people burdened with guilt, bound by fear, enslaved to habits which are sinful, shackled with an attitude that is far from the living in the freedom of Christ. Yet here Paul says Jesus has set us free.

In John 8 verse 32 Jesus says the truth shall set you free and four verses later in verse 36 he says **'if the Son sets you free you shall be free indeed.'**

How come Christ has set us free and yet many Christians are still in chains, still in bondage, still shackled by fear, by sin, by the flesh, the world and the devil?

In John Bunyan's book Pilgrim's Progress there is a point at which Christian's burden, which he has been carrying all his life, falls off his back and rolls away. It falls off at the foot of the cross and it rolls into an empty tomb. **He never again carries that burden on his back** – the burden by the way is sin.

Christ died to set us free from the **burden of sin.**



Jesus said **'come unto me all that labour and are heavy laden and I will ...' ...add more weight to your burden?**
No, **'and I will give you rest.'**

What was the constant refrain coming from the lips of Jesus to people? – 'Come to Me and I will remove your burden of sin.'
We have been freed from the burden of sin.

You see that is why Paul warns the Galatians not to put the yoke of the Law back on themselves again.

Heretics had got in amongst them in the church and had started to win them over to the heresy saying that in order to be saved they **need to be circumcised. It seemed so easy to them and almost so obvious that this was right but it was wrong.** It was a minor medical procedure but the theological and doctrinal implications were enormous.
What Paul says is this – if you believe that circumcision is necessary then you do not believe that Christ's death on the cross is sufficient to save you from your sins.
In fact you have **rejected the gospel of grace** and you have gone back to the **'good works'** path.

And you all know that all the Law does is convict you of your sin and burden you with guilt.

When Moses came down Mount Sinai with the tablet of commandments and he began to read the law to the people in the desert what was their reaction?

Guilt, shame, despondency and desolation.

The Law did not spell freedom it spelt condemnation.

Because it convicted them of their sin – that was why a sacrificial lamb was provided so that an atonement through the **shedding of blood** could be made on their behalf.

The Law brought condemnation and guilt. It laid a burden on the people. **It held them in bondage.**

But when Christ, the Lamb of God, came He fulfilled the Law's requirement and made atonement for the sins of many.

The burden was lifted from off the back of the people because the requirement of the Law had been met and a perfect life was sacrificed in their (and our) place.

So why would the Galatians go back into slavery when they had been freed from bondage?

Well it was the pattern of their forefathers, and ours.

The people of Israel are led out of the slavery of Egypt but no sooner are they free than they begin to **grumble** that life was better back in Egypt. The Galatians were doing the same. They allowed men to come in amongst them and to sow heresy. There is always something in the heart of each man and woman that **wants to earn salvation**, that wants to contribute something towards it.

Paul says you can't earn salvation and in trying then you deny the gospel of grace.

Paul says here you have been **freed from the requirements of the Law**. BUT I am NOT saying **you are free to break the Law**.

Paul is speaking about our relationship with God, he is speaking about our justification before God.

That it is Jesus Christ's death and resurrection which justifies you before God, that it restores you to a right relationship with God.

He goes on to say you have been freed from sin but he does not say you are free to sin. You are free from sin but that is not the same as saying you are free to sin. You are free from the condemnation of the Law but you are not free to disregard or break the Law.

The cross is like a narrow bridge over a place where two polluted streams meet. One stream is called legalism and the other is libertinism. One seeks to be right with God by rules and regulations – or good works. The other seeks to use Christ's atonement as a licence for sin.

Both are wrong and we need to keep our balance and walk over that narrow bridge. It is so easy to fall into one or the other of those two filthy streams.

It is so easy, and in some ways safe, to become legalistic.

The other danger is 'libertinism' where people live in whatever way they choose believing that Christ has forgiven them all sin and therefore sin does not matter anymore in their lives.

God has called us to freedom in Christ.

Paul tells the Galatians, and us, we are made right with God by grace through faith in Christ – our justification. That frees us from the burden of sin, from a guilty conscience, from the fear of death.

However we may be freed from sin but we are not free to sin.

We also have freedom of access to God and freedom of acceptance by God – all because of Christ.

Therefore **'stand firm'** in the freedom which Christ brings, and Christ alone brings.

Do not go back into the old way of trying to earn or win God's favour by obedience to the Law.

The Law condemns. The Law convicts and brings a guilty conscience but God has cleansed that conscience by the pre-

vious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1 v18-19)

What are we free to do?

If God has freed us from the burden, the punishment of sin but we are not free to sin then what are we free to do?

Freedom to enjoy a relationship with God that was once denied to us because of our sin.

Is it a joy to you to be a Christian? I do not mean are you always happy.. **I mean is being a Christian a joy or a burden to you?** God loves you unconditionally – you cannot make Him love you anymore and there is nothing you can do which will make Him love you any less.

Your salvation is in Christ – not your obedience.

But your sanctification is in your obedience.

Your holiness, your personal godliness, your witness before God and others depends on your obedience. Your salvation is all of Christ.

Your sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit each day leading you to obey God's Word and will so that you might become **more like Christ each day**. Do not mix up **your sanctification** and your justification.

We are free to be obedient, obedience leads to godliness, holiness and Christlikeness.

What do you have freedom to do?

You have freedom to serve your neighbour.

Paul says in Galatians Chapter 5 verses 13-15 that we have been freed to serve others, not exploit them.

You see the mark of freedom is service. Sounds strange but we are told we are no longer our own but have been bought with the blood of Christ.

We are freed from the slavery of sin and become servants of Christ.

We display our freedom in Christ by serving others in the name of Christ. It is out of our freedom that we serve. It is an expression of our love towards Christ who has set us free that we serve others in His name. We are freed from self-indulgence and from the slavery of our sinful nature.

We are being freed from the power of sin in our lives and in its place comes the fruit of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit in your life brings freedom – against such things Paul says there is no law, nothing to condemn, nothing to convict and therefore no guilt. So we are free to be filled with the Spirit, which brings freedom and not bondage. We are free to live without condemnation of the past or fear of the future. God does not wipe away sin, give you salvation and then put on handcuffs of past memories to hinder your Christian life. No, such handcuffs are self-imposed. You are free from your past – He has wiped it clean.

It no longer imprisons you – the debt has been paid.

Odd One Out

1: Old Testament Books

Genesis

Jude

Psalms

Obadiah

2: Sons of Noah

Shem

Ham

Japheth

Cain

3: 12 Disciples of Christ

Paul

Peter

James

Matthew

4: New Testament Books

Revelation

Hebrews

Ecclesiastes

Luke

5: Plagues upon Egypt

Frogs

Locusts

Darkness

Flood

6: Judges

Gideon

David

Samson

Jephthah

7: Friends of Job

Ahaziah

Bildad

Zophar

Eliphaz

8: Prophets

Daniel

Ezekiel

Solomon

Jeremiah

9: Tribes of Israel

Naphtali

Simeon

Zebulun

Joseph

10: 10 commandments

Do not kill

Do not steal

Do not covet

Do not hate

11: Beatitudes

Weak in faith

Poor in spirit

Pure in heart

Peacemakers

12: Present at transfiguration

Moses

Elijah

Elisha

Jesus

13: Kings of Israel

Ahab

Hezekiah

Zachariah

Hoshea

14: Rivers in scripture

Galilee

Jordan

Euphrates

Jabook

15: Raised from the dead

Jesus

Jairus

Lazarus

Eurychus

16: Servants

Gehazi

Onesimus

Artemas

Malchus

17: Trees in scripture

Olive

Yew

Palm

Oak

18: Metals in scripture

Zinc

Gold

Tin

Lead

19: Mountains in scripture

Horeb

Sinai

Ebal

Armah

20: Pools in scripture

Gibeon

Beer-sheba

Samará

Bethesda

Hymns, Prayers and Bible Readings.

EXHORTING TO WORSHIP

From Hebrews 12

Come to worship the Lord - to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the city of the living God, to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; to God, the judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous, to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant. Do not refuse Him who speaks. Come to worship the Lord! **Amen.**

CONFESSING OUR SINS

From Psalm 109

O Lord, we need You, our hearts are wounded:
We have sinned against You -
Forgive us, O Lord.

Our days fade like evening shadows:
We have sinned against You -
Forgive us, O Lord.

We are weak and despise ourselves:
In Your constant love save us;
Through Jesus our redeemer. Amen.

Bible Reading Galatians 5 v1-6 NKJV

¹ Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

² Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.

³ And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

⁴ You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt* to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

⁵ For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Hymn based upon Galatians 1

1. How heavy is the night
That hangs upon our eyes,
Till Christ with His reviving light
Over our souls arise!

2. Our guilty spirits dread
To meet the wrath of heaven;
But, in His righteousness arrayed,
We see our sins forgiven.

3. Unholy and impure

Are all our thoughts and ways;
His hands infected nature cure
With sanctifying grace.

4. The powers of hell agree

To hold our souls in vain;
He sets the sons of bondage free,
And breaks the cursed chain.

5. Lord, we adore Thy ways

To bring us near to God;
Thy sovereign power, Thy healing grace,
And Thine atoning blood.
Isaac Watts

DEDICATING OURSELVES

From Philippians 3

Lord, whatever we once thought gain,
We offer You for the sake of Christ:
We long for Him - to be found in Him,
And, through faith in Him
To gain the righteousness
That comes from You alone;
We want to know Him,
The power of His resurrection
And the fellowship of His suffering;
To die to ourselves
That we might rise with Him to eternal life. Amen.

GOING OUT FROM WORSHIP

From Philippians 1

Rejoice and pray in the Spirit:
Jesus will set us free!

Hope in God and believe; have courage:
we are not ashamed!

Let Christ be exalted in you:
For us to live is Christ,
To die is gain. Amen.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee
Charles Wesley