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CAPTIVITY & SLAVERY; **DELIVERANCE & FREEDOM**

The Horror of Slavery - “Slavery.” The very word brings revolting images to mind. We think of Colonial America and the enslavement of two million black Africans who were worked to death on the cotton plantations of the old South. It seems an anachronistic word: slavery was something that happened in the distant past. But we learn that today, in 2018, there are several million sex slaves, thousands in our own nation. Several years ago a news show interviewed one of the young women who were held captive by the monster, Ariel Castro, for nearly a decade.

Definition of “slave:”

(1) a human being who is owned as property by another and is absolutely subject to his will; a bondservant divested of all freedom and personal rights.

The reason I have been thinking of slavery is that I have been ministering to two people who are trying to break free from their enslavement to addictions: a father of three little ones who has been in and out of jail many times and in 12 or 13 different rehab programs, all because of meth and other drugs; and a woman, aged 60, who is trying to break free of her 20-year addiction to gambling. The woman is my daughter, Jeannine, who has been living with me for the past three years. (I can report, with thanksgiving, that Jeannine has now gone without gambling for 170 days. Her testimony follows this article.)

(2) a person who is completely dominated by some influence, habit or person.

Slavery is not a subject that is irrelevant to our lives. Every one of us is either at this present moment in bondage (enslaved) by one or more addictions; we are in the process of being set free from those addictions; or we are, by the grace of God, walking in the freedom that Christ has given us. Read these New Testament words about slavery:

- *Jesus replied, I tell you the truth, whoever sins is a slave of sin. (John 8:34)*
- *Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. (Romans 6:16)*
- *I love God's law within my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin within me. (Ro. 7:23)*
- *Once we too were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. (Titus 3:3)*
- *They promise freedom but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you. (2 Pet. 2:19)*

NOTE: **Because of the proliferation of addictions in our society to alcohol, drugs, opioids, gambling, pornography, social media, etc., I am reprinting for the next 3 months, my teaching from 2013 on this subject.**

- *Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants. (2 Tim. 2:26)*

The blessedness of freedom from slavery – Can we even imagine the joy of the slave population in our young nation when they learned about Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation? Or the joy of those three young women in Cleveland when they were released from that house of horrors? Or the joy of a soul that is released from the slavery of sin and addiction?

These are a few of the many New Testament words about freedom:

- *And Jesus said to the people who believed in him, You truly are my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. (John 8:31)*
- *Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living. (Ro. 6:17)*
- *For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. (1 Peter 2:16)*

What I understand the Bible to say is: Sin is, by its very nature, addictive and enslaving. Any sin. Every sin.

Following is the sequence: Temptations come. Temptation is not sin. (*Jesus was tempted in every point as we are, yet without sin.*) But if we allow that temptation to stay in our mind, we will eventually yield to it, so the sequence continues: Temptation – sin – habit – addiction/bondage – loss of freedom/slavery.

The central paradigm of the Old Testament is the story of God delivering His chosen people from slavery in Egypt, which is a picture of Christ delivering His people from their slavery to sin.

The intricate story of Moses leading the Jews from slavery to the promised land, a story that only the God of the universe could have woven, contains many deep insights about how God delivers us from the slavery of sin to freedom as God's sons and daughters. Let me point out some of the obvious corollaries in these two stories:

1. God tells us in the New Testament that the totality of the Old Testament was recorded for our instruction, and 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 specifically mentions Moses and the deliverance of the children of Israel. Verse 11 reads: *Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition.*
2. Moses (a type of Christ) brought deliverance to those trapped by Pharaoh (a type of the devil) in Egypt (a type of sin or the world), leading them out of Egypt (salvation), through the Red Sea (baptism), through the wilderness (testing), into the promised land (rest and blessedness in this life and heaven in the life to come). The resurrected Christ declares that everything in the Old Testament ultimately concerned Him: *Then He said to them "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and*

the Psalms concerning Me. And He opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” (Luke 24:44-45) (We should constantly pray that Jesus will so open our understanding.)

3. After Moses' call at the burning bush, he went to the children of Israel in Egypt and told them that God has sent him to deliver them (Exodus 4 and 5). (a) The first step in their deliverance was that they had to hear and believe the good news. (b) It is important to recognize that there was no way in the world that the Jews could deliver themselves from slavery. A deliverer had to come from outside with divine empowerment in order to deliver them. (c) Girls and boys and young women in the captivity of sexual slavery cannot deliver themselves. Unless someone comes and rescues them or pays for their ransom they will suffer and die in their slavery. (d) People in bondage to sin/addiction cannot free themselves. They need a Savior. “But people who are not Christians can, on occasion and with will power, stop certain addictions.” Of course that is true. But man cannot deliver himself from the control of sin and selfishness that will express itself in diverse ways without divine help.

4. It is also true that many people cannot get free of their addictions to drugs, alcohol, over-eating, gambling, video games, Facebook, pornography, fornication, homosexuality, the occult, etc, without outside help. They need to be “saved.” And usually their deliverance and healing is not instant but a long, difficult process.

5. After the Jews came out of their slavery in Egypt, they were unable to enter the promised land because they continued to carry a slave mentality inside. At more than one point they cried out, “Let's go back to Egypt!” So they died in the wilderness. Likewise, there are men and women who have received Christ as their Savior but who are never able to enter the promised land of rest and victory in Christ. I have ministered to many of them.

6. The paradigm of slavery and freedom followed the children of Israel throughout their history: The book of Judges records 325 years of a constant refrain of (a) unfaithfulness to God – (b) enslavement by foreign enemies – (c) repentance and crying out to God – (d) deliverance by a “Judge” (a righteous ruler and general raised up by God) – (e) peace – (f) repeat. After Israel was divided into a northern kingdom (Israel) and a southern kingdom (Judah), unfaithfulness resulted in defeat and enslavement of Israel by Assyria in 722 BC, and defeat and enslavement of Judah by Babylon in 586 BC.

The parallel to modern nations and individual lives is clear. It certainly appears that the level of addictions in our society is rising to new levels. Next month I will share some things I have been learning about addictions.

ARE YOU KIDDING ME, GOD?

(Testimony of Jeannine Grasko)

The first time I played a slot machine I loved it! And so began a love affair that lasted over 20 years. It provided an escape from the pain in my life and an inner thrill that is hard to describe. I got married in Las Vegas, and I really would have loved to live there close to a casino. Since I had children and lived in Los Angeles, my gambling outlet became bingo and scratch-off tickets. Of course, I traveled to a casino as often as possible: Vegas, State Line, Laughlin, Tahoe, Mesquite, Ute Mountain, Blackhawk, etc. And I always prayed, “God, please let me win!” I did win a lot and thought that God was blessing me.

After I moved to Grand Junction I visited the bingo parlor and purchased a lot of scratch-off tickets until a gambling place named “777 Sweepstakes” opened here. This is casino type gambling on the internet, and it is supposedly illegal, yet it continues to operate. I started almost living at that place and for the first time began to realize that my gambling had gotten out of control but pushed that thought out of my mind. I continued to make excuses for the time and money I was devoting to gambling, but then the Holy Spirit started speaking to me. He made it clear to me that He did not like my gambling. Unbelievable! I was shocked. At first I thought it was the devil. I said, “Are you kidding me, God?”

But no, He was serious. I stopped gambling, but I went into deep depression and had nightmares and other experiences that I believe were demonic. I received in-depth ministry from a wonderful team in our church. I was hoping for a quick, complete deliverance. Much to my distress, it did not happen. To this point, it has been four years and nine months and I still have to fight against the power of that crazy addiction.

With the help of God, ongoing ministry from people in our church, and Gamblers Anonymous I am living one day at a time. I had no idea it would be such a struggle to overcome this addiction. I would appreciate your prayers.

SHOULD MARK 16:9-20 BE A PART OF OUR BIBLE?

An ongoing controversy among some Bible scholars concerns the last 12 verses of the Book of Mark. For instance, a footnote in the NIV translation states: “Serious doubt exists as to whether these verses (16:9-20) belong to the Gospel of Mark. They are absent from important early manuscripts and display certain peculiarities of vocabulary, style and theological content that are unlike the rest of Mark. His Gospel probably ended at 16:8, or its original ending has been lost.”

Dr. Chuck Missler strongly disagrees. He states: “This view is simply not true. There are several ways to disprove this claim. First, in AD 150 Irenaeus quoted the passage in his commentary, so it must have been around in the second century. Hippolytus, also in the second century, quoted it. Furthermore, if the last 12 verses of Mark were omitted, the passage would end with the followers of Christ frightened and confused, which is inconsistent with the tenor of the text.” Dr. Missler then shares some technical aspects of this passage

relating to its structure, syntax, heptadic constraints, etc, that are amazing and convincing. (See [Learn the Bible in 24 Hours](#), by Chuck Missler.)

The translators of the New King James Study Bible take the same view as Dr. Missler. They state regarding this passage: “Many scholars question the authenticity of vv. 9-20, primarily because of omission of these verses in some of the earliest manuscripts, and because their style is somewhat different from the rest of Mark. However, Christian writers of the second century, such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tatian, testify to the inclusion of these verses, and the earliest translations, such as the Latin, Syriac, and Coptic, all include them. In any case, the passage does reflect the experience and expectation of the early church concerning the practice of charismatic gifts, and the question of its authenticity should remain open.”

I believe that this passage of Scripture belongs in the Bible for the following reasons:

- I believe that the same God who was the Divine Author of the Holy Bible, and who “breathed” through the human authors, also superintended and guarded its transmission in pure form through about 1,500 years of history.
- The final words of the resurrected Christ in Matthew 28:18-20 are generally called “The Great Commission.” But Jesus also commissioned His followers in this passage of Mark, and in Luke, John, and Acts. Compare Matthew 28:18-20 with Mark 16:9-20. Also consider John 14:12 as a part of the Great Commission: *He who believes in me, the works that I do he will also do; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to my Father.*
- We need to compare Mark 16:9-20 with all of the rest of God's revelation in the Bible, “the whole counsel of God,” to determine if it is consistent. There are two statements in Verse 18 that are not consistent and obviously need to be construed figuratively, the parts about “taking up serpents” and “drinking anything deadly.” Everything else is confirmed by other teachings in the New Testament and by church history.
- The reports and instructions in Mark 16:9-20 that parallel other Scripture in the New Testament: (a) Jesus' resurrection appearance first to Mary Magdalene (b) His appearance to the 11 disciples (c) His appearance to the two

disciples on the road to Emmaus (d) His “Great Commission” (e) His ascension into heaven (f) A report of the disciples' obedience (g) of God confirming their work with miracles and signs (h) and of the fruitfulness of their labor.

- The Great Commission to the church (the part in red letters) contains the following charge to His followers:
 1. Go to everyone and preach the Good News
 2. Baptize those who believe
 3. Cast out demons
 4. Speak in new tongues
 5. Lay hands on and heal the sick

Sounds like Jesus' teaching to me. Who else in all the earth would have the audacity to declare such things? Glory hallelujah!

QUOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

1. If you are going through a trial that is overwhelming, remember that we would probably never have heard of David if he had gone out in front of the army and killed a midget. Joyce Meyer says, “Bigger level, bigger devil!”
2. CheAhn, an American pastor of Korean ancestry, reported about one of his churches: A seven year-old boy came up on the platform at the end of the service, tugged on the pastor's sleeve and said, “I want to say something.” the pastor repeated his words to the congregation, “He says he wants to say something!” Everyone laughed. “All right, son what do you want to say?” The boy said, “Jesus is here.” A holy hush fell on the congregation. People started coming to the altar and being healed – the blind, the deaf, the crippled. All we need in church is the presence of Jesus – and someone with eyes to see Him!
3. That reminds me of an experience that my friend, Steve Wilson, had many years ago. Steve was born in Mexico to pioneer missionary parents, Ford and Beth Wilson. One time Steve was having a baptism service in the Atlantic Ocean (which is a big baptismal pool), and his five-year-old son, Sammy, was watching his dad. Sammy asked if he could baptize one of his little friends. Steve thought that was funny and watched Sammy pray for his friend and dunk him in the ocean. Then the little boy came up out of the water speaking in tongues.
4. If you are going to walk in peace and joy, STOP COMPLAINING! IT MATTERS. Remember the children of Israel in the wilderness. They were not allowed to enter the promised land!
5. FLEECING GOD'S FLOCK - - A while back a Christian magazine had an article about how a lot of church people had been fleeced by a “Christian” investment councilor. Some Christians had lost their life savings. A summary of what the news article said was, “If a Christian friend has told you about a too-good-to-be-true investment scheme, it is probably not true.” Be careful. Exercise godly wisdom.

God Bless

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