

Freedom from Sin

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Romans 6:22 “But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.”

Deep in the corridors of death row sat a guilty prisoner awaiting execution. On one fateful day the jailer walked into the prisoner’s cell causing the prisoner to wonder if this would be the day of his death. After months and years of waiting on death row, he knew this day would inevitably come. Just as the prisoner was dropping his head in shame and despair, the jailer said the words which echoed through his mind, “I am setting you free. Another man has turned himself in and requested that you be released immediately.” After fully expecting to die, the prisoner had a look of astonishment on his face. The jailer assured him by telling him that all his criminal records would be erased. He went on to say that he will not be put to death and that he can freely walk out of his cell today. It would be an understatement to say the prisoner was overjoyed. Overwhelmed with gratitude, the prisoner thanked the jailer and walked out of the cell that had him bound for countless years.

Is this not a picture of the wonderful freedom men receive by grace through faith in the blood of Jesus? Jesus Christ has turned himself in so that we can walk freely out of the cell that has had us bound. Not only are we free from the guilt and consequences of our crimes against God, but we are free from the chains of bondage that held us captive. Teaching and preaching that a man can be saved from the guilt and consequences of his sins, but yet not be saved from his sins themselves would like the jailer telling the prisoner “you are free, your record is erased, you will not be put to death, but you must remain bound in this cell for the rest of your days.” That would be no freedom at all! If we are to be slaves of God and slaves of righteousness, we must be free from death, hell, and also sin itself.

There is no such thing as treadmill Christianity. To say that a man who desires to be holy will never be able to reach it in this life opposes the very teachings of Jesus who said “blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” (Matt 5:6). God never intended for the Christian to be as a mouse in a cage running anxiously and endlessly on a running wheel yet never getting anywhere. God has always intended to set men free, and “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36).

Am I proposing here that a man can be holy while remaining here on earth and that a man can obey all the commandments of the Lord? Absolutely I am because this is what reason, logic, and the scriptures force me to believe and accept and I wouldn’t want it any other way. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). And also “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Gal 5:16). If you are lead by God

will He not lead you into all righteousness? Is it impossible to obey the One who said “follow me”? (Luke 18:22). Was it unreasonable when Christ said “I have given you an example that you should do as I have done”? (John 13:15).

God has not charted a course which is impossible to sail. Nothing shall be impossible for God. So long as God is the Captain and Commander of the ship He can and will sail it wherever He so pleases. Certainly mutiny against the Captain and Commander is possible on our part, but loyalty is also a possibility.

E. M. Bounds stirs us to pursue personal holiness in this quote: “Nothing short of absolute obedience will satisfy God. The keeping of all His commandments is the demonstration of obedience that God requires. But can we keep all of God’s commandments? Can a man receive moral ability that helps him to obey every one of them? Certainly he can. By the same token, man can, through prayer, obtain ability to do this very thing...Does God give commandments that men cannot obey? Is he so arbitrary, so severe, so unloving, that He issues commandments that cannot be obeyed? The answer is that, in all of Scripture, not a single instance is recorded of God having commanded any man to do a thing that was beyond his power. Is God so unjust and so inconsiderate to require a man something that he is unable to do? Certainly not! To infer is to slander the character of God.”

I fear that the issue is not that man can not obey God, but that many men will not obey God. Many do not walk in holiness because they have yet to forsake their sins and walk in complete repentance. But true repentance is always complete. If a man is driving down a two way road and fails to pay attention and therefore ends up on the wrong side of the road he is in great danger. He is in even greater danger when he notices a massive Mac truck heading straight for him. Panic grips his heart and sweat pours from his brow. What must he do? The answer is simple enough. He must suddenly, not slowly, get back on the right side of the road. If he leaves even a little bit of his vehicle on the wrong side of the road that would be enough to get him killed. Likewise, when you’re on the road of life and you end up on the wrong side of the road called sin, you are in grave danger because the Mac truck of death and hell is heading straight for you. What ought you to do? As quickly as you can you must get completely on the right side of the road. If you leave even the least bit of your life on the wrong side of the road is that not enough to get you killed?

And so it is that Christ has set us free, so we must walk free. The pardon has been issued, the records have been erased, and the cell gate has been opened wide. Now it is up to us to walk out of the chains of bondage into the marvelous freedom that is found in Jesus Christ.

Quote: The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds page 155-156.