



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Saturday/Sunday, 9/15-16/18
“Through Christ: Freedom”

Romans 8:1-11

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Monday, 9/17/18

“The Liberating God”

Exodus 6:6-8

“Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.’”

The promise made by God, through Moses, reveals much about who God is. God is a God of liberation; setting his people free from their bondage. Adopted into God’s family in and through Jesus, the story of the Israelites becomes our story. It is this promise made in Exodus that provides the framework for how we are to understand God’s work in and through Jesus. Jesus

has come to liberate us from our bondage to sin and death, and we can truly live free through faith in Jesus Christ.

- What consistencies do you notice between the God revealed in Exodus and the God revealed in Jesus Christ? What do you think it means to live free from the bondage of sin and death? How have you experienced this freedom? What do you think it means to be redeemed?

Prayer: Holy God, we praise you for the freedom we can experience through your Son, Jesus. We thank you for your great mercy and grace, and for the opportunity made available through Jesus to live as you created us to live. Help us to live as your redeemed children, trusting in you and your great love for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, 9/18/18

“Forgiveness”

Acts 13:38-39

“Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.”

When we encounter the freedom found in Jesus, we find it to be a freedom from the bonds of sin. It is a freedom manifested as forgiveness; that God pronounces us vindicated and just by forgiving us of our sins. We experience such forgiveness and vindication through faith in Jesus Christ. This forgiveness shapes our understanding of God, of ourselves and of the people around us. God is a God who forgives. We are the recipients of an undeserved forgiveness. All the people we encounter are invited to experience that same forgiveness. Forgiveness is the gift of a good and loving God.

- Think about a time that you have received forgiveness for having wronged someone. What was that experience like? Describe that relationship before and then after experiencing forgiveness.
- Have you experienced the forgiveness of Jesus? What was it like for you to experience that? How did that forgiveness change your relationship with God?
- Who do you need to forgive? How can you practice the forgiveness of Jesus with whoever you encounter?

Prayer: Holy God, we thank you for the forgiveness we receive through Jesus Christ. We thank you for restoring our relationship with you. Help us to live faithfully into the life of forgiveness that you offer to us, showing your grace and mercy to everyone we encounter. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Wednesday, 9/19/18

“Free to Love”

Galatians 5:13-14

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Often we understand freedom primarily in a negative sense; that freedom is purely a freedom *from* bondage, sin and death. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatian church, makes the case that freedom *from* sin and death, turns into a freedom *to* live a life of faithfulness, service and love in Jesus Christ. We are free in Christ to love our neighbors as ourselves.

- What do you think it means to serve others humbly in love? In what ways do you love yourself? How can you extend that same love to your “neighbor”?

Prayer: Holy God, we thank you for the great love you have for us. Help us to reflect the same love you show us in the lives of everyone we encounter. Help us to use the freedom you give us to serve others humbly in love. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Thursday, 9/20/18

“Creation Liberated”

Romans 8:20-21

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

The freedom inaugurated in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection is all-encompassing. Christ’s freedom is not just for us as human individuals, but is meant for all of Creation. All of Creation, it seems, is waiting eagerly and expectantly for all of God’s children to be revealed and redeemed; that Creation’s redemption and freedom follows our redemption and freedom. Spend some time this week reading through all of chapter 8 in Paul’s letter to the Romans.

- What sticks out to you about Romans, chapter 8? What bondage and decay do you see in Creation? What do you think it means for all of Creation to be freed?

Prayer: Holy God, you are the God of all of Creation. We praise you that you are at work to redeem not just us, but your whole created order as well. Help us to join in with your redeeming and freeing work in the world. Bring to mind ways that we can witness to your all-encompassing freedom. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Friday, 9/21/18

“Slaves of God”

Romans 6:22-22

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It seems antithetical that Paul would say that, in order to experience freedom, we must be slaves of God. How can this be? Aren’t freedom and slavery completely at odds? Well, not only does Scripture bear this out, but the lived experience of every Christ-follower witnesses to the reality that we are most free when we are in bondage — in slavery to — God. This seeming contradiction is true simply because we are all created for God, and it makes all of the difference that the God who calls us into bondage to him is a perfectly good and loving God.

- What is your first reaction to Paul's seemingly contradictory statement of being free through bondage to God? What do you think it means to live as a slave of God? What do you think it means to be holy? How do you experience the love of God?

Prayer: Holy God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Help us to live into the true freedom we were meant for by binding ourselves to you. Empower and enable us by your Holy Spirit to live holy lives of love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

***This week's devotions were written by
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