

JOHN 8:31-41  
FREEDOM AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’ They answered him, ‘We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, “You will become free”?’”

“Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.’”

“They answered him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing what Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing what your father did.’ They said to him, ‘We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.’”<sup>1</sup>

**W**e are currently engaged in studies designed to present an apologia for our faith and practise as evangelical Christians, and especially as Baptists. Baptists are not an historic anomaly in Christendom; rather as founding members of the Christian community, Baptists have sought unceasingly to adhere as closely as possible to the doctrine of the Apostles. As Christians, Baptists are orthodox in doctrine and evangelical in practise. As Baptists, we are committed to being thoroughly biblical in expressing our Faith. Above all else, we make every effort to hold to the apostolic teaching delivered in the Word of God.

**As Christians**, we confess that Jesus Christ is truly God in human flesh; that He died a sacrificial death; that He was buried and that He rose bodily from the tomb. We confess that He ascended into Heaven, and that by faith in Him, and by faith alone, all who believe are forgiven all sin and delivered from judgement. The foundation for these beliefs is the Word of God, which we receive as authoritative and accurate in all details.

**As evangelicals**, we hold and teach that we must be saved through faith in the Risen Son of God. We believe that we who have faith in Christ are responsible to live a holy life, honouring God in the choices we make and in our manner of life. We believe that man is sinful in every facet of his being, but that God redeems us to His glory and for our good. We believe that all who trust the Lord receive His Holy Spirit and are thereafter disciplined for His purposes. We hold that we are responsible to unite in congregations where we may worship Christ, teach the truths of the Word of God, evangelise the lost and build one another through exercise of the spiritual gifts entrusted to each of us as Christians. We also believe in the resurrection of the redeemed and the lost—the saved being raised to life and the lost facing the resurrection of damnation.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Wheaton: Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

**As Baptists**, in addition to holding to positions defined by orthodoxy and evangelicalism, we also hold to the historic distinctives that have defined us as Baptists. Included among the Baptist distinctives are the authority of God's Word for faith and practise, the autonomy of the local congregation and the priesthood of the believer. We insist that there are only two ordinances—ordinances and not sacraments—that have been entrusted to the churches of our Lord—baptism and the Lord's Table. As Baptists, we avow and defend individual soul liberty, endeavour to maintain the principle of a saved, baptised church membership, and hold to two offices, elders and deacons, among the churches. We also believe that the Word of God teaches a separation of church and state. These convictions shape who we are and they determine our faith and practise.

Illuminating the principles championed by Baptists is the freedom found in Christ. I contend that this is a Baptist principle, though I am equally confident that this is sound Christian doctrine. Freedom in Christ does not mean that whatever I wish to believe about a subject is valid, neither does it mean that my actions are of no consequence; freedom in Christ does mean that the conscience cannot be violated by another mortal. Freedom in Christ teaches that the conscience must not be coerced, though it does not proscribe pleading with the recalcitrant soul to heed the message of life.

This great blessing of freedom in Christ is firmly grounded in the revelation of Christ Jesus as Lord; it is an integral part of Scripture. One place in which this principle of freedom is clearly revealed is in the Gospel of John. John records an exchange between Jesus and people who were following Him. In fact, the text says that those who were shocked by His words that day were actually people who had "believed in Him."

Jesus said, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free" [JOHN 8:32]. These words are often found on the seal of colleges and universities, especially if the school was established in an earlier era. However, Jesus was not speaking here of truth in a philosophical (or absolute) sense, or even in the intellectual sense. In the context of John's Gospel, it should be apparent that Jesus was speaking of saving truth—truth about His Person and the Work He was to perform. The truth of which He spoke is that truth which saves the individual from sin, not that which saves one from the darkness of error. Though it is true that there is a sense in which Christ saves us from gross error, the truth offered in Him is saving truth, truth that leads to life and freedom.

**CHRIST OFFERS FREEDOM** — "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." We are informed in the preceding verse that even as Jesus was speaking, "many believed in Him" [JOHN 8:30]. The Jews whom Jesus addressed in our text were also those who had believed in Him. The very individuals who had believed in Him were the same ones trying to kill Him [vv. 37, 40]. They would also shortly insult Him [v. 41]. Do you find this strange?

I must pause to remind you that it is possible to believe the facts about Jesus and yet fail to believe Him. It is possible to believe what He says about Himself and fail to believe Him. This is the reason Jesus begins this exchange with the cautionary warning, "If you abide in my Word, you are truly my disciples." The key to being a disciple is to *abide*—continue—in His Word. This does not say that one abides in His Word in order to be a disciple; but if one is a disciple, he will abide in His Word. The believer not only believes the facts concerning Jesus, but the believer believes Jesus. This truth is made clear in the prologue to John's Gospel.

In **JOHN 1:10-13** we read concerning Jesus that, “He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” To believe Christ is to receive Him as the promised Messiah of God. Believing Jesus is receiving Him as Lord of life.

Those who believed Christ were rightly expected to confirm their belief through continuing in His Word. Those who continued in His Word would discover the truth, and in His truth, they would find freedom. There is a fascinating verse in Hosea’s prophecy.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;  
because you have rejected knowledge,  
I reject you from being a priest to me.”

[**HOSEA 4:6**]

The verse is fascinating because it speaks of the consequence of the lack of knowledge. There is a great difference between intelligence and knowledge. An individual may be intelligent, but lack knowledge. Again, an individual may have a great deal of knowledge, but demonstrate a lack of intelligence.

Often we think of intelligent people as wise people. Such individuals will not necessarily have an advanced degree from some prestigious institution, but they seem to use their minds wisely to apply knowledge or information that they possess. Such people will succeed in life no matter what deficits with which they seemingly are encumbered.

Alternatively, we are perhaps aware of people who possess knowledge, but who are nevertheless fools. These individuals may have an earned doctorate and possess great technical skill, but somehow they seem to be unable to connect all the dots. Their home life is in shambles, they are rude and unpopular, they are inconsiderate or they live a hopeless existence. Clearly, intelligence and knowledge are two different concepts.

Nevertheless, knowledge can prove to be a great blessing—if it is combined with wisdom. Among the tomes situated on the shelves of my library are a number of books. One excellent volume was authored by Arthur Holmes, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Wheaton College. Holmes writes, “All truth is God’s truth wherever it be found.”<sup>2</sup> However, Holmes does follow up that statement by reminding readers of his book “We do not affirm that everything men take to be true is God’s truth.” It is important for us to understand what he meant by this statement. Though all truth is God’s truth, not every creedal statement or worldview ethic is a representation of that truth. Christianity alone properly claims to have the fullest revelation of God’s self-disclosure.

The measure of a disciple is the ability to hold to the Master’s teaching. In his Second Letter, John demonstrates this truth. “Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son” [**2 JOHN 9**]. Disciples are called to believe Christ, but true belief will lead the disciple to submit to Christ as Master. This relationship between belief and submission to His mastery is revealed in **ROMANS 10:9**: “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

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<sup>2</sup> Arthur F. Holmes, **All Truth is God’s Truth** (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL 1983) 8

The proper means for a disciple to confess Jesus is through immediate identification with Him. The identification expected is baptism. In baptism, the disciple identifies with Christ in His death and in His resurrection. Those who are truly disciples are called to “abide” in Jesus’ Word [*tō lōgō*], referring to Jesus’ teaching. Disciples are called to receive His teaching, submitting to Him as Master and obeying all that He commands. I might restate this truth by warning that it is not in confessing Jesus as Lord that one is saved, but it is rather in possessing Jesus as Lord that one is saved. Words are of scant importance in securing salvation—the new birth is necessary.

The disciple will be set free through surrender to the mastery of Jesus the Christ. I began a joyful captivity almost forty-four years ago. On January 21, 1967, I made a covenant to be faithful to beautiful, redheaded nurse; I thereby began a marvellous sentence that has led to freedom. Such freedom could never have been known had I flitted from one relationship to another or had I been unfaithful in my commitment to her.

Over forty-one years ago, I began an even more glorious captivity that has brought me unprecedented freedom. In October of 1970, I surrendered to Jesus the Son of God. At that time, I accepted Him as Master of my life and became His bondservant. Submitting to the mastery of Christ, I discovered true freedom. Knowledge of Christ, knowledge of His will, knowledge of what He is doing to redeem fallen mankind, brought me into freedom. The freedom He promised is freedom from condemnation, freedom to please God, freedom to discover fulfillment in service to His people.

**SLAVERY AND FREEDOM** — Jesus’ offer of freedom caused those who were on the cusp of discipleship to react negatively. They denied that they had ever been enslaved. Jesus responded by making one of the truly great statements of Scripture. “Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” [**JOHN 8:34-36**].

The statement is great because everyone is a slave to something or to someone. Either one is a slave to Jesus Christ the Lord, or one’s own desires hold her captive and lead her astray. Either we are willing slaves of Jesus—submitting to Him as Master of our lives—or we are enslaved by sin. Peter speaks of religious teachers who are actually “slaves of corruption.” He then clarifies this point by making the following declaration. “Whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved” [**2 PETER 2:19**]. Every Christian was “once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures” [**TITUS 3:3**]. That dark statement that James makes leaves us almost breathless. You no doubt recall these words. “Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully-grown brings forth death” [**JAMES 1:14, 15**].

The desires of our flesh become the means by which we are held in helotry. The child of God seeks to fulfil the Father’s desires. In the same way, the child of the devil unconsciously does his or her father’s desires [see **JOHN 8:44**]. Even among the professed people of God will be found some who serve, not our Lord Christ, but “their own appetites” [see **ROMANS 16:17, 18**]. The fruit of their work is to “cause divisions” and to “create obstacles.” Paul reminds us that even some who professed to follow God in the wilderness were judged and overthrown. The reason this happened is that their judgement would serve as examples for us, “that we might not desire evil as they did” [see **1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-6**].

Elsewhere, Jude warns that despite being identified as belonging to the professed people of God, “grumblers” and “malcontents” are actually exposed through their actions as “following their own sinful desires” [JUDE 16]. Of course, the desires of the flesh lead at last to the works of the flesh, itemised in GALATIANS 5:19-21. The life we once lived is characterised as a life corrupted by those same desires that led us to revel in the works of the flesh [see EPHESIANS 2:3; 4:22]. Those desires are associated with “sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires” and “covetousness” [COLOSSIANS 3:5]. Therefore, God issues a stern warning to His people through His Word. “All that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever” [1 JOHN 2:15, 16].

As an aside of considerable significance, I caution that government sanctioned efforts to normalise homosexuality demonstrate mankind’s bondage to wickedness. Such a statement is necessitated because today we are witnessing an assault against godliness. This assault is manufactured by social engineers, self-serving politicians and tyrants wearing robes—judicial activists seeking to reinvent moral righteousness. These moral termites, abetted by pandering politicians, are intent on remaking a bold, new society unlike any we have known. Homosexuality is no more sinful than is slander, grumbling, drunkenness and lying; but neither is homosexuality any less sinful than other sins.

I remind you that God, through His servant Jude has condemned homosexuality. “The angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire” [JUDE 6, 7].

Thus, we have established that the individual who “commits sin is a slave to sin.” The issue of sin revealing our nature is expanded when John writes in his First Epistle, “Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that [Christ] appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God” [1 JOHN 3:4-9].

In focus is one’s lifestyle, reflecting whether one is in bondage to righteousness or in bondage to one’s own desires [see ROMANS 6:16-22]. The standard by which we must judge whether a lifestyle is wicked or righteous is the Word of God. Society as a whole is incapable of providing a standard to determine whether actions are righteous or wicked. The collective social conscience is unreliable, subject as it is to the whim of the moment. Therefore, social conscience is ephemeral, evanescent, a phantasm, a will-‘o-the-wisp. Popular opinion is always unstable and ever changing, following the prevailing view promoted by the loudest voice. Not so the Word of God! It is “living and abiding” [1 PETER 1:23]. The standard provided by the Word of God never changes since God cannot change to meet the transient desires of this dying world.

We witness mankind held in thralldom to sin as we focus the light of the Word on the contemporary way of life, but we must also realise that Christ calls us to become willingly His slaves so that we might enjoy His freedom. To iterate, Paul reminds us that each individual is in servitude either to sin or to Christ. “Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness” [ROMANS 6:16]?

Here is the astounding oxymoron—slavery to Christ results in freedom! This is not freedom to live as you wish, but it is rather freedom to live as you ought. This is the basis for Paul’s justifiably famous declaration of Christian liberty found in GALATIANS 5:1. “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” The liberating message is expanded soon after as the Apostle instructs us as Christians, “You were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’” [GALATIANS 5:13, 14].

Are you a slave to your own desires? Or have you submitted to the reign of Christ Jesus as Lord over your life? How does this slavery play out in daily life? In simplest terms, the child of God determines the will of the Father by reading the Word. The Bible reveals the mind of God, demonstrating what is pleasing to Him. Undoubtedly, there are portions of the Bible that are hard to understand. However, it is not the parts that we do not understand that tend to disturb us, but it is rather those portions that we do understand that unsettle us most of all. Nevertheless, we who are following Christ read His Word and by this we discover what is pleasing to Him.

Knowing the will of God, we who are servants of Christ the Lord face the same temptations to sin that confront all humanity. The difference between the bondservants of Christ and those enslaved by sin is that we who are surrendered to the rule of Christ Jesus have within us the Spirit of God to convict us of sin and to guide us into righteousness. We who belong to Christ have available the power of God, which we can appropriate to enable us to choose what is right and pleasing.

Our situation as slaves of sin is revealed in Paul’s sorrowful lament recorded in ROMANS 7:13-19. “Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.”

When the Apostle cries out for deliverance, we see that it is Christ Jesus the Lord to whom he calls [see ROMANS 7:24, 25]. If we will be delivered from this body of death, it will be the power of Jesus that sets us free. Practically speaking, we who are Christians insist that “God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” [1 CORINTHIANS 10:13].

Though we Christians live in a fallen world, we are citizens of Heaven [PHILIPPIANS 3:20]. We are sinful, and yet we have been forgiven. We are always dying, but we are nevertheless alive. We are persecuted and opposed, but we are not forsaken. We are attacked, but we cannot be destroyed or crushed. As slaves of Christ, we no longer live for this momentary life. Rather, our eyes are fixed on Christ and our hope is to receive the smile of Heaven. We seek the applause of Heaven and not that of man.

Years ago, when I first read Paul's letter to the Christians of Philippi, I discovered one of the most powerful letters to be included in the canon of Scripture. In this letter to the Philippian Christians is one portion of God's Word that forever changed my life, transforming me into a willing bondservant of Christ. Listen to PHILIPPIANS 3:7-10.

"Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death."

Over thirty years ago, I determined to follow Christ whatever the cost and wherever it might lead me. That resolve resulted from reading and meditating on these verses. Never have I regretted that decision. He has been generous to me through His people, and He has enabled me to serve Him with a strength that is not my own. He has enriched me in every way so that I have been able to build up saints for His Name's sake; and I have been privileged to be present when the Spirit of God gave New Birth to many saints. Once I was a slave of sin, but God saved me and made me a slave of Christ. Now, I know that as a son I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.

**LIFE AS A REFLECTION OF PARENTAGE** — "I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father." Genetics count. Even more so does parentage count. Who we are is revealed in how we live. To an amazing extent, our heritage dictates how we will live, and a major portion of our heritage is the environment in which we grow up.

You may have at one time read one of the several versions of the poem by Dorothy Law Nolte, "If a Child Lives." The original version of that poem reads as follows.

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.  
If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.  
If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.  
If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.  
If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.  
If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.  
If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.  
If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.  
If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.  
If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.  
If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.  
If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.  
If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.  
If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.  
If children live with fairness, they learn justice.  
If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.  
If children live with security,  
    they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.  
If children live with friendliness,  
    they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.<sup>3</sup>

Who we are reflects what we live with.

Freedom is a Baptist principle; it has always been championed by Baptists. Freedom is emphasised among Baptists wherever they may gather. On May 16, 1920, George Truett, far famed Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, at the request of the Baptist churches in Washington, addressed the nation. Standing on the east steps of the American Capital, Truett gave a most memorable address concerning religious liberty. At one point, Truett spoke of the view of Baptists concerning liberty.

“Although the Baptist is the very antithesis of his Catholic neighbour in religious conceptions and contentions, yet the Baptist will whole-heartedly contend that his Catholic neighbour shall have his candles and incense and sanctus bell and rosary, and whatever else he wishes in the expression of his worship. A Baptist would rise at midnight to plead for absolute religious liberty for his Catholic neighbour, and for his Jewish neighbour, and for everybody else.”<sup>4</sup>

The message just delivered, emphasising the freedom of believers and detailing the impact of this truth on the manner of the life of believers, is foundational for future studies of the truths we hold dear as Baptists. If we are set free to honour God and to fulfil our potential as the highest example of His creative work, then the church should reflect that freedom. We are responsible to receive one another with respect and honour. We are to prefer one another in love. We are to seek good for our brothers and sisters.

This is not to ignore the corollary to freedom that we are obligated to use our freedom responsibly. As Christians, we are responsible to hold one another accountable for faith and practise. We are lovingly to seek the best for each other, admonishing one another in love when we deviate from truth or when we stumble in our walk. We are to care deeply for one another, daring to intervene when it is necessary, instead of silently condemning the erring sister or brother while refusing to speak the truth in love.

A Baptist is one who values saving truth. As one who is redeemed, the Baptist will not squander the grace received by spending it on his own desires. He recognises that he has been saved to serve, and he will seek out a fellowship where he will be able to fulfil the purpose of God Who saved him and where he can be held accountable to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Similarly, the Baptist will make every effort to share the saving faith of Christ with all who will receive it.

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<sup>3</sup> Dorothy Law Nolte, “Children Learn What They Live,” ©1972, [http://www.empowermentresources.com/info2/childrenlearn-long\\_version.html](http://www.empowermentresources.com/info2/childrenlearn-long_version.html), accessed 27 June 2011

<sup>4</sup> George W. Truett, **Baptists and Religious Liberty**, address found at <http://www.reformedreader.org/baptistsandreligiousliberty.htm>, accessed 27 June 2011



That is the import of this message. I trust that it serves as a call to each of us to consider who we are. If we are born from above, let us remember that we have been born into God's Family. Therefore, we are responsible to reflect the character of our Father. We are to begin by demonstrating that freedom both in our own manner of life and in accepting one another, even as Christ has accepted us. We are also responsible to tell others of the freedom that is offered in Christ our Lord.

I generally appreciate the manner in which Eugene Peterson interprets the Word of God. One place where the intent of Scripture is strengthened is in **ROMANS 10:9-13**. Peterson's treatment of this passage is as follows. "This is the core of our preaching. Say the welcoming word to God—'Jesus is my Master'—embracing, body and soul, God's work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead. That's it. You're not 'doing' anything; you're simply calling out to God, trusting him to do it for you. That's salvation. With your whole being you embrace God setting things right, and then you say it, right out loud: 'God has set everything right between him and me!'

"Scripture reassures us, 'No one who trusts God like this—heart and soul—will ever regret it.' It's exactly the same no matter what a person's religious background may be: the same God for all of us, acting the same incredibly generous way to everyone who calls out for help. 'Everyone who calls, "Help, God!" gets help.'"<sup>5</sup>

This is the message we deliver to each individual sharing our service this day. For believers, this word serves to remind us that we are responsible to tell others of Christ the Lord, a mark that we indeed live as free people. For those among us who are yet outsiders to grace, I pray that the message will serve as a gracious call to discover the freedom that is offered through Christ the Lord. Receive the message of life today. Believe that Christ has died because of your sin. Believe that He has risen to declare you free of condemnation. Enter into the freedom of Christ the Lord. Do it now. Amen.

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<sup>5</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, **The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language** (NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO 2003)