

Set Free!

I. Announce:

- A. Victor Marx movie:
- B. **Prayer:** Ps.124:7,8 - The Great escape, soul escape, set free!

II. Slide #1 Intro:

A. **Steve Brown** tells a story about a time his daughter **Robin** found herself in a very difficult *English Literature course* that she desperately wanted to get out of. She sat there on her first day and thought, "If I don't transfer out of this class, I'm going to fail. The other people in this class are much smarter than me. I can't do this." She came home and with tears in her eyes begged her dad to help her get out of the class so she could take a regular English course. Steve said, "Of course." So the next day he took her down to the school and went to the head of the English department, who was a Jewish woman and a great teacher. Steve remembers the event in these words: *She (the head of the English department) looked up and saw me standing there by my daughter and could tell that Robin was about to cry. There were some students standing around and, because the teacher didn't want Robin to be embarrassed, she dismissed the students saying, "I want to talk to these people alone." As soon as the students left and the door was closed, Robin began to cry. I said, "I'm here to get my daughter out of that English class. It's too difficult for her. The problem with my daughter is that she's too conscientious. So, can you put her into a regular English class?" The teacher said, "Mr. Brown, I understand." Then she looked at Robin and said, "Can I talk to Robin for a minute?" I said, "Sure." She said, "Robin, I know how you feel. What if I promised you and A no matter what you did in the class? If I gave you an A before you even started, would you be willing to take the class?" My daughter is not dumb! She started sniffing and said, "Well, I think I could do that." The teacher said, "I'm going to give you and A in the class. You already have an A, so you can go to class."*

1. Later the teacher explained to Steve what she had done. She explained how **she took away the threat of a bad grade so that Robin could learn English.**
 - a) Robin ended up making **straight A's on her own** in that class.
2. **That's how God deals with us. Christians already have an A.**
3. The threat of *failure, judgment, and condemnation* has been **removed**.
4. **We're in-forever!** Nothing we do will make our **grade better** and nothing we do will make our **grade worse**. **We've been set free!**

B. **Slide #2** What motivates you toward **obedience**? What is the best motivator, to motivate others towards **obedience**? (Like your children; your employees; your students; new believers)

1. **Slide #3** Some try **fear, guilt, threats, shame**. And it works...for a time, a short time.
 - a) But **fear & guilt aren't** big enough **nor** powerful enough to get someone to obey...for the long haul! (try it on your kids & you'll see)

- b) Its the engine of the **gospel**, Gods radical & outrageous **Grace** is the only thing that can fuel *a long joyful obedience* in the same direction.
2. **Slide #4** The bible esteems **Grace!** - The kind of grace that is...*uncomfortably radical; unbearably scandalous; & unbelievably scary.* **Why?** Because it wrestles control out of our hands.
- a) **What do I mean?**...I mean when a **new believer** gets saved, they come into church & we immediately try to *churchify* them. **So God will be pleased with them, or by them.**
- (1) We tell them how to dress; talk; what music they can listen to now; what movies they can see; & most importantly, which words are cuss words & which ones aren't.
3. Let's see how Paul deals with this.
- C. **Slide #5** Title: **Set Free.** Theme: **A New Master.**
- D. Outline: **A New Problem; The New Obligations; The New Duties; The New Rewards.**

III. THE NEW MASTER! (6:15-23)

- A. **Slide #6 A NEW PROBLEM!** (15a)
- B. *Under law* implies at least 3 things:
1. A Divine *commandment demanding* perfect obedience.
 2. A Divine *promise of reward* for perfect obedience.
 3. A Divine *threatening of punishment* for falling short of perfect obedience.
- C. *Under grace* implies at least 2 things:
1. A revelation of the Divine attitude & will *as gracious.*
 2. A Divine bestowment of *inward power* to obey.
 - a) Thus, *under grace* cannot possibly mean *license to sin.*
- D. Some see that there are **2 equal dangers** Christians must avoid: **Legalism** & **Lawlessness**(license)
1. **Slide #7** Often talked about like **2 ditches** on the side of the road of life.
 2. **Legalism** deals too much on **law/rules** - **Lawlessness** deals too much on **Grace.**
 - a) They think, If all you talk about is **Grace**, then lawlessness happens.
 3. I would say **NO**, there is only **one** enemy of *the gospel of grace* & that's namely **legalism...yet it comes in 2 forms:**
 - a) **Front door legalism:** keeping rules, doing what everyone tells me to do, being a good boy, then if I stay w/in these boundaries, & keep the rules, then I will save myself.
 - b) **Back door legalism:** is for those who go the other way, breaking the rules, doing whatever. But this is just *another form of legalism.* It's just another law you are submitting yourself to. (they are simply *a slave being lead to death* - vs.16)

4. Again, *under grace* cannot possibly mean *license to sin*.
- E. The protest once again...*Certainly not!* God forbid!
- F. **Slide #8 THE NEW OBLIGATIONS!** (16-18)
- G. (16) *Who will you present yourself to obey?* Joshua 24:14,15(msg) *So now: Fear God. Worship him in total commitment. Get rid of the gods your ancestors worshiped on the far side of The River (the Euphrates) and in Egypt. You, worship God. If you decide that it's a bad thing to worship God, then choose a god you'd rather serve - and do it today. Choose one of the gods your ancestors worshiped from the country beyond The River, or one of the gods of the Amorites, on whose land you're now living. As for me and my family, we'll worship God.*
- H. **Slide #9 Bob Dylan**, hit it on the mark in the late 70's w/his hit "*Gotta Serve Somebody!*"
1. You may be an ambassador to England or France
 You may like to gamble, you might like to dance
 You may be the heavyweight champion of the world
 You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls
 But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
 You're gonna have to serve somebody
 Well, it may be **the devil** or it may be **the Lord**
 But you're gonna have to serve somebody.
 2. **No one is completely free!** (i.e. absolutely dependent from authority or control)
 - a) Ironically, only by being *a slave to Christ* are we truly **free**.
 3. **Paul says we only have 2 choices!**
 - a) **Serve Sin** = leads to *death*.
 - b) **Serve Christ** = leads to *eternal life*.
- I. **Both demand what? - Obedience!**
1. Some actually think that they are in control of their own destiny.
 - a) They feel *neither* their *handcuffs* *nor* their *fetters*.
 2. **Regardless of the religious claims they made, their real master was identified by the commands they obeyed.**
 - a) If they obeyed the commands of **sin**, then **sin** was their master, & **death** their destiny!
 - b) If they obeyed the commands of **rt.**, then **rt.** was their master, & **life** their end!
 - (1) **You get to choose who you want to serve, but once you have, you must perfectly obey that master.**
 - (2) **And what a slave does, is absolutely determined by the master to whom he belongs.**
- J. So, Lets talk about **Obedience!** - Surely now Gods telling to "do" something! **No.**

1. God deeply cares about what **motivates** our **obedience**.
 - a) **Slide #10** Cain & Abel both **obeyed...externally...**to come up w/a sacrifice.
 - (1) But **Abel** did it because he **got to**, & **Cain** because he **had to**.
 2. Compare the **obedience** of the **Pharisees** to **any OT saint** (David, Noah, Moses) These **Pharisees** rocked w/**obedience**. Yet Jesus gives his stiffest rebukes to these **obedient moralists**.
 3. Its why NONE of Paul's letters start with what we need to **do**.
 - a) **Instead**, always begins w/**what God has already done!**
 - (1) To get this the other way around is to **miss** the gospel!
 - b) Eg. **Colossians** has 4 ch.'s - **Ch's 1,2** describe the glowing & remarkable things God has done for us in Christ! **Ch. 3** starts w/*then live this way!* **Seek those things which are up above. Set your mind on things above.**
 - c) Eg. **Eph.**'s 1st 3 ch.'s - This is what God in Christ has done for you. Ch.4, **Therefore, walk worthy of your calling.**
- K. **Slide #11,12** Here's the Key: The gospel focus on Jesus performance for **us**, **not our** performance for **Him!**
1. On what **He's** done, **not** on what **we** can do!
 2. **I believe if we understand this, grab on to this CM, we'll be less enslaved to our sin, & more grateful for Jesus!**
 - a) And the more grateful we are for Jesus, the more we'll want to **live a life that pleases Him!**
 3. So when we identify **the Gospel** as **"the death, burial & resurrection"** yes this is true.
 - a) **What HE DID is the gospel.** And because of that we simply respond with **awe & adoration; grateful hearts** & a desire to **now live out from that** a life that pleases our Lord.
 - b) Which is our **Mission** *To Love God completely, To Love people authentically, & To Make disciples globally.*
 - c) Which is our **Motto** *To Live the Great Commandment, To Fulfill the Great Commission.*
 4. **And now**, because Jesus is **Extraordinary**, we are free to be **ordinary**; Because Jesus is **Someone**, we are free to be **no-one**; Because Jesus **Succeeded**, we are free to **fail**.¹
- L. (17,18) As Christians though, our choice of **Masters** has already been made!
1. **Note:** **past tense** in these verses.
 2. So, the question of **ownership** & our **allegiance** has already been **settled**.
 - a) Christ has rescued us from the cruel reign & mastery of sin, & brought us under His caring ownership.

¹ Tullian Tchividjian, podcast.

3. (17b) yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine(gospel) to which you were delivered(entrusted).
- a) Grab the picture from the word *form*, the believer being poured into a form/mold & thus taking on its shape, by yielding, by obedience from the heart.
 - (1) *Eg. Mac Rumor iPhone5* will be made of *Liquid metal!* Different metals liquified & then molded into the new case. *Soft like plastic. Hard like metal.*
 - b) At salvation God poured us into the mold of His Son Jesus. May we be **soft/pliable** when it comes to **loving others**; & **hard/unbending** when it comes to truth & obedience.

M. **Slide #13 THE NEW DUTIES!** (19,20)

N. Our new duties is *yielding* to **righteousness** w/a view to **holiness!**

1. It's a transfer of moral energy.

O. (19) **Human terms?** – i.e. *metaphor of slavery* doesn't completely do justice to the new Christian's freedom in Christ. **But** it does help us in seeing the *change of allegiance and domination from sin...to Christ!*

1. **Also remember**, slavery is an ongoing condition, *rather than* a 1-time purchase.

P. **Slide #14 THE NEW REWARDS!** (21-23)

Q. *New Rewards like...* being set free from sin(22a), bearing fruit to holiness(22b), everlasting life(22c), the gift of eternal life(23).

R. (22) If a Christian fails *morally*, it is not because the needed power was **not available**. It is because it was **not appropriated**.

S. (23) **Fruit** - is *the expression of life* & may be said to indicate *character rather than conduct*.

1. The 9-fold description of *the Fruit of the Spirit* is an expression of the believer's **character** as indwelt by the Spirit of God.

T. (23) **Wages** – provisions, wages of a soldier.

1. **Deserved payment**, *versus* an **undeserved gift!**

2. The **pleasures** of sin are never compensated for by the **wages** of sin. – **Sinning is not worth it.**

3. **Two things** there are which man has no arithmetic to reckon and no line to measure. **Slide #15**

- a) **One** of these things is *the extent of that man's loss* who loses his own soul.

- b) **The other** is *the extent of God's gift* when he gave Christ to sinners.

- U. **Slide #16** Why did **Muhammad Ali** change his name from **Cassius Clay**? He said that **Clay** was a name that came from slavery and he would not wear it any longer!
- Slide #17** What he did not know was this: the **Cassius Clay** for whom he was named was *a fiery opponent of slavery*. He opposed it at a time when it was quite dangerous to do so. **On the other hand**, the original **Muhammad Ali** did *nothing* to replace slavery with freedom.
 - As Christians we wear the name of the one who **set us free!** [In Christ Jesus our Lord]
- V. Chinese proverb: You don't drown by falling in the water, you drown by staying there.
- Will you receive the gift? Or, continue to earn sins wages?
 - Choose your Master!
- W. Knowing that **God's love for you** and **approval of you** will **never** be determined by **your performance for Jesus** **but** **Jesús' performance for you** will actually make you perform *more and better, not less and worse*.
- X. **Slide #18** In other words **grace mobilizes performance**; **performance does not mobilize grace**
- Just ask Robin who got the "A"!*
- Y. **Slide #19,20** **Rock of Ages** wasn't just a song about **Justification**, but about **sanctification**.
- Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless look to Thee for **grace**;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.