

Faith Of Our Youth

October 1999

"The Voice of Young Christian Faith"

Volume 6 Issue 3

FREEDOM OR BONDAGE

by Richard Garbi

Throughout history, people have fought and died over two words: freedom and bondage. Their effects on our society are vast. We Americans prize our freedom. "Give me liberty or give me death." is a physical example. Yet this is also true in the spiritual realm. Ever since Jesus came down and saved us from sin and death we have been fighting a spiritual battle. The outcome will decide our fate for eternity.

The Bible emphasizes when we commit sin we become slaves to it. If you lie and get caught, the easiest thing to do is to tell another lie to cover up. If you lie again to cover up these lies then the deception controls you. Galatians 4:3-5 says, "*Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*" Also John 8:34, "*Jesus answered them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.' 'Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin'*" (Rom. 6:6-7) "*But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?*" (Gal. 4:9) Hebrews puts an interesting spin on this concept when, in chapter two verse fifteen Paul writes, "*And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*" It says that through the fear of death we are subject to bondage. Death puts a boundary on

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Wisdom of our Elders First and Best by Lola Richardson

God gave His, can we do less? *John 3:16, Heb. 9:28 and 26, Eph. 5:2*

He died for us; He asks us to live for Him. *Rom. 12:1, I Cor. 3:16-17, I Cor. 6:19-20, II Cor. 6:16-18*

Jesus gave us an example of obedience. *Heb. 5:8, Phil. 2:8* God told Saul to obey is better than sacrifice. *I Sam. 15:22, Psalm 51:15-17, Prov. 21:3, Hosea 6:6, Mark 12:33, Heb. 2:1-3*

I am so thankful that I grew up in a home that honored Jesus and His church. I was taught that my best clothes were my "church" clothes and my first commitment to time was scheduled times of worship. We did not stay at home for company who might come Sunday; all our friends and family knew we would not be there if they came on the first day of the week. *Heb. 10:25, Deut. 16:8.* We never "went on vacation from God," but always sought a house of worship when we traveled. When my Grandmother died at age 93, her youngest daughter wrote in tribute to her that all of her children and grandchildren were following her example of Christianity.

God instituted a system of sacrifices for His people. All of them required the shedding of blood. The first acceptable sacrifice to God was the first of Abel's flock. *Gen. 4:4* The first act of Noah coming out of the ark was a sacrifice to God. *Gen. 8:18-20* Abraham trusted God to provide an offering in place of Isaac, the firstborn of promise. *Gen. 22:8, Heb. 11:17-19, Heb. 11:12*

God specified a yearling male without blemish for the Passover. *Exodus 12:5* Christ is our

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"But We Were Hoping..."

by Eric Owens

"And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had taken place. And it came about that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself approached, and began traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

"And He said to them, 'What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?' And they stood still, looking sad.

"And one of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, 'Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?'

"And He said to them, 'What things?'

"And they said to Him, 'The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping...'

"But we were hoping..."(and now our hope is gone.)

HOPE IS A LOADED QUESTION.

It, many times, places your expectations in the hands of someone else to be fulfilled. Because of this, we choose very carefully in whose hands we place our hope... but, invariably, we are disappointed. Sometimes, the one with whom we've entrusted our hope doesn't

measure up to the task. Expectations go unfulfilled. Other times, things aren't taken care of-- at least, not the way we thought things should be.

When first married, one or both parties may conceive of a lifelong honeymoon: an existence and relationship above and be-

"When you consider Jesus Christ, He has answered the loaded question of hope..."

yond the problems of the everyday life. (But the older, wiser realize... a honeymoon must include such things.) Soon, reality begins encroaching on the unreasonable expectations; for there are still clothes to wash, lawns to mow, meals to cook, bread to be won. If asked, few married couples would admit to being so idealistic-- yet, the divorce numbers confess this to be true.

"But we were hoping..."(for something much different.)

HOPE IS A FIRE.

Nothing motivates like HOPE. Leaders have tried to spur men to action by other means throughout history-- only to find their efforts fall far short of what is needed. Money hires a mercenary that will turn tail and run at the first sign of a tough go. Coercion holds a hostage in service until a more powerful ally comes to depose the oppressor. Hatred of a common enemy, even in the face of victory,

finds itself a poor substitute for the love of an honorable cause.

Hope strikes a match to the wick of the soul. As with the fire of heat, one must treat and use hope with caution and respect. Hope placed in an inappropriate vessel may blow out in the winds of life's changes. If

uncontained, it may destroy the some-time fragile hold on true reality-- transposing fruitless daydreams in the stead of healthy, concrete contemplation. If unrequited, hope can consume the soul's wick to the point of despair.

"But we were hoping..."(it wouldn't take this much effort or time.)

HOPE IS A LIGHT.

There is a saying: "Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us." This being true, it must be noted that the burden(s) we bear are NOT cast behind us-- rather, the shadowy gloom surrounding them is forced from our sight. We will always have burdens to suffer... hope doesn't change that. Instead, it changes our focus from the crosses we all must bear to the pathway of righteousness that must be trod. Hope lights the Way to the Goal. Sufferings aside, the weather along life's journey isn't always temperate. At times, the day is long and hot. In our impatience with waiting on the Lord, the temptation is to stop and seek refuge in the shadow of our burdens. If we focus primary efforts on the satisfaction of daily, temporal needs(or self-

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WISDOM (Continued from page 1)

Passover today. *I Cor. 5:7, John 1:29, I Peter 1:18-19, Rev. 5:9, Eph. 5:2* And He was a male without blemish for a burnt offering. *Lev. 1:3, 10* These sacrifices were a type of Christ's ultimate, final sacrifice, *Heb. 9:14*, and all required blood, which signifies life. *Gen. 9:4, Acts 15:20, 29, Heb. 9:22*

Jesus asks us to follow and to love Him and our fellow man. *Matt. 10:38, Matt. 16:24, John 15:8-14*

First and best. Commit your life to God, your marriage to God, and your children to God. *I Sam. 1:27-28*



Member of Pleasant Ridge Church of Christ

FREEDOM (Continued from page 1)

men in the world because to them death is a mystery. *"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage"* (II Peter 2:19).

If we are in bondage in sin, how can we also be servants of Christ? The Bible also impresses us that we are servants of Christ. The Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, said that Jesus was his servant. If we are to become more Christ-like we must also become God's servants. In many of Jesus' parables he uses examples of servants that are given tasks. Their obedience determines their reward. (Isaiah 42:1, Matt 18:23, Matt 24:46, Matt 25:21) John 12:26 *"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor."* We see in Romans 1:1 that Paul calls himself *"a servant of Jesus Christ"*. I Corinthians 7:22 says, *"For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant."* Paul also says in I Corinthians 9:19, *"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more."* Also in Galatians 1:10, *"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."* Finally, Revelation 1:1 directly calls us servants of God. *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to*

show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."

The Bible also has much to say on the freedoms found in Christ. *"Now the Lord is that Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"* (II Cor. 3:17). Galatians 5:1 says we are made free from the bondage of sin. Galatians 5:13 says that we have been called into liberty. *"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed"* (James 1:25). Also James 2:12 states, *"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."* John 8:32 says, *"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* In John 14:6 Jesus says *"I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* If Jesus is truth then he is also freedom. If we are Christ-like we have found freedom. *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"* (John 8:36). *"Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness"* (Rom. 6:18). Romans 8:2 *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"* (Rom. 8:2). *"For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant"* (I Cor. 7:22).

Freedom in sin is not an option for a Christian. If we are free here on this earth, we would have no need for God. *"For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness"* (Rom. 6:20). What does this all mean? We are free in Christ but we are also slaves. We are free in the world but also slaves of the world. Our entire being has two parts, the spiritual and the physical. When we are in the world and slaves of sin, our spirit is put into bondage and the carnal man is free. In Christ our spirit is made free and our carnal man is enslaved. We have only two choices. Either we can live our life in physical freedom now and suffer eternally. Or, we can control our physical lives and be slaves of God in order to live in eternal freedom.



Member of Eldon Church of Christ

pity), we can excuse ourselves from more earnestly pressing toward the Goal. We allow the soul of man to be swallowed by the shadow of his burdens, the shadow of his own mortality. Not unlike this natural inclination, clouds and storms arise with the intent to obscure and extinguish the light that is hope. We may not count Him Faithful, in Whom we have put our hope and trust.

"But we were hoping..." (and it appears as though we must now do this thing for ourselves.)

Sometimes the light dims. Sometimes, the flame doesn't burn as high.

Sometimes,... doubt supplants the expectation of hope.

"But we were hoping..."

Our thoughts return to the disciples on the way to Emmaus. The candle of faith, the candle of hope in these men's hearts flickered in the wind of their own expectations. They had hoped for something much different. They had hoped their time and effort would have not gone for naught-- but the Saviour had waited too long,... and now He was dead. They had hoped that Jesus would do a thing for them that they could not do for themselves.

What a letdown. Jesus CHRIST??? What a disappointment.

...but wait.

What of GOD'S expectations?

"Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My Chosen One in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or raise His voice, nor make His voice heard in the street. A bruised reed, He will not break,...

...AND A DIMLY BURNING WICK HE WILL NOT EXTINGUISH;...

...He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed, until He has established justice in the earth; and the nations will wait expectantly for His law."

For three days, the wick that was Jesus smoldered in the grave. Many believed it to have gone out. But by God's assurance, and by HIS expectation of hope in His Son's obedience, was the wick of Jesus's Life merely trimmed in His triumph over death and sin to burn ever-brighter in the house of humanity.

...and the disciples??

"...And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to each other, 'WERE NOT OUR HEARTS BURNING WITHIN US while He was speaking to us on the road...?'"

When you consider Jesus Christ, He has answered the loaded question of hope... for we know Him to be the Author and Finisher of our faith (Heb.12:1), which is the substance of things hoped for (Heb.11:1). Though Christ has vanished from the sight of man-- He is Worthy of your hope.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE OF CHRIST?

Salvation? Done. A Better Way? It has been made. Eternal Life? His blood heals the mortal wound of sin.

...And it all springs forth from One who was but a smoldering wick-- Who has established Himself as the ignition of Salvation's hope, and the Light of men.

Luke 24:13-21, Isaiah 42:1-4, Luke 24:31, 32

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Member of Prince Road Church of Christ

My Savior

by Jennifer Morales

*Traveling through darkness,
Not knowing where to go,
Then spying in the distance,
Your lantern's bright, warm glow,
You pulled me from the darkness,
And guided me back home.
You showed me how to get there,
And paved the path for me,
Now safe, we live together,
Through all eternity.*

♦ ♦ ♦

Member of Sanger Church of Christ

Seventy Times Seven?!

by Kristy Kuhn

Have you ever had anyone do something or say something against you that hurt your feelings? Maybe it hit deep into your inner being, maybe so hard that you didn't truly want to forgive that individual again. But is that what Christ wants?

In Matthew 18:21-22 it says, "Then Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.'"

When Peter posed this question to Jesus, one can almost see into his mind. Peter probably thought that he was being very generous when he suggested seven times, yet Jesus surprised him by saying seventy times seven. Can you imagine Peter's reaction to this jaw dropping and heart racing with the thought of his Master actually commanding this of him! Yet this is exactly what Christ wanted, and we as His followers must obey this.

Many times it is very hard to truly forgive a person. Maybe they have said something hateful to you, or did something to betray your trust. In today's society, we are taught to seek revenge on that person, but we as Christians are commanded to forgive. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you." (Eph. 4:30).

If Christ could die for every single person's sins, I believe that it is our duty to forgive others, just as He did us. He forgave ALL of our sins, not just one. Can we do that for others?

Mark 11:25-26 commands, "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." To me, this is both a comforting and frightening command. On one hand, God will forgive us of our sins if we will forgive others. On the other hand however, if we aren't willing to forgive each other, God won't be willing to forgive us.

Even when Christ was being led to die, He still was forgiving. Luke 23:34 says this, "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots." The ultimate betrayal, yet He was still willing to forgive. Forgiving is part of living a Christian life, and we must do this if we want to have eternal salvation. We have to let Christ help us. By praying for others who have wronged us, forgiveness will come easier. Are you willing to forgive when you have been wronged against? Up to seventy times seven times? It is a strong command, yet in order to obtain salvation, we must do this. We must be, "kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you." (Eph. 4:32).

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Member of Topeka Church of Christ

Emotion in Motion

by Chris Owens

2 SAMUEL 6:14..."and David danced before the Lord with all his might..." This snapshot of Israel's greatest king took place just after returning the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem from the clutches of the evil Philistines. What brought on this onset of happy feet? It was from a deep sense of thankfulness to God as borne out in verse 17 of that same chapter as he sent burnt offerings into the heavens and towards his Creator.

The simple proposition I put forth now is that, as a general rule, such shows of emotion are unfortunately devoid in our 'everyday' walk of life and even more shamefully lacking amongst 'our own'.

I've been blessed to grow up, physically and spiritually, in the true church, so I believe I know of whence

I speak. Forget the 'dancing' before our Maker in joy and gratitude. What seems to be more commonplace is perhaps the uncomfortable silence that follows a brother or sister's spontaneous 'amen!' or the averting of the eyes at the emotion a speaker might show when expressing their thoughts on what the Savior's death means to them during Communion.

Causation of this, in my observation, stems from countless years of ritual. See if this recipe sounds familiar: Mix 5 or 6 songs together with 1 scripture reading, sprinkle in 3 or 4 prearranged prayers; oh yes, don't forget the Lord's Supper and the collection, add 1 sermon of predetermined length and there you have it - one Standard Church of Christ Sunday Morning

Service.

Lest you think me trite and flip, consider how many things you do in this life over and over the same way, time upon time, and still have the same enthusiasm for the thousandth time as the first? In my opinion, the world's perfect food is my mom's persimmon pudding. But if I consume it for breakfast, lunch and supper, it wouldn't hold such a special place on my palate for long.

As long as we come together as the church to fill a seat, fill some time, and not fill our soul, we cheat ourselves and each other. But we won't cheat God, he won't let us.

Ritual occurs unconsciously more times that not, and that is what makes it so dangerous. The compla-

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Songs of Our Youth

Unworthy Am I

Lyrics: Dan Huff
Chorus:

Music: D. Huff
Arr. John P. Morris

Un - wor - thy am I, un - wor - thy am I.
Un - wor - thy am I, un - wor - thy am I.

You sent Your Son for me to die.
You sent Your Son for me to die.

Un - wor - thy am I, un - wor - thy am I.
Un - wor - thy am I, un - wor - thy am I.

You saved me, when I was con - demned to die.
You saved me, when I was con - demned to die.

1. His life He gave, for me on the cross.
2. So self - ish am I, and I am so blind.
3. Would I give my life, to die for a friend?
4. I will now serve, with all that I have.
5. Now wor - thy am I, yes, wor - thy am I.
1. His life He gave, for me on the cross.

Songs of Our Youth

Unworthy Am I

To save my soul, from suf - 'ring and loss.
 He said, "Your will be done, and not Mine."
 God gave His Son, to die for all men.
 I will now serve, cour - age - ous and glad.
 I'm just - i - fied, by Christ's prec - ious blood.

To save my soul, from suf - 'ring and loss.

He came to earth, to teach men Your way.
 I've sinned so much, I do not de - serve.
 He has called me to yeld and to serve.
 I will now serve, with all that I have.
 Now wor - thy am I, yes wor - thy am I.

He came to earth, to teach men Your way.

D.S. al Fine after verse 4

He came to earth to heal and to save.
 He free - ly gave, it sounds so ab - surd.
 A priv - i - lege, I do not de - serve.
 I will now serve, cour - age - ous and glad.
 No long - er I live, but Christ lives in me. **Fine**

He came to earth to heal and to save.

Brothers Music

"Melodies of My Heart"
God's Awesome Gift!

by Dan Huff

There is something very special about music. It transcends generations, cultures, and languages. There is nothing like music that can pull at one's heartstrings and emotions. Music is an attempt to express emotions that are beyond speech. Music is one of the Eternal Maker's great gifts to the human race!

There are few highs that can compare with breaking into a song...singing Alleluia with brethren of the same faith and mind!

"Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the assembly of saints" (Psalms 149:1, NKJ).

Countless times as I sing a song, I wonder what prompted the author to write such words to a melodious harmony. What were they thinking, what trial or joy were they experiencing? Where were they when the words flowed from their brain onto paper?

The song in this issue of FOOY, I wrote three or four years ago. I was driving from Eldon to the Murray Road (Lee's Summit, MO) Memorial Day Weekend Meeting.

I was really looking forward to being with my brethren and being spiritually filled. As I traveled, I thought about the meetings that I had been to in my life, about my brethren, and the many blessing that God had abundantly bestowed upon me. I thought of the air that I breath and take for granted, my family, brethren, friends, and close relations that I had made with my brethren.

As I drove a storm came from out the blue. Through the storm I saw God's matchless power in the lightning bolts, and feeling the propulsion of the wind against my little car; knowing that at any time He could crush me like the gnat that I am. My mind wandered through the portals of time and the various instances that my life had been spared. I began to ponder why...why had the Almighty God spared my life so many times? I am not worthy of God's generous mercy. Then my mind traveled back in time

some 2,000 years ago, to a scene depicting God's ultimate love, mercy, and grace. The more I focused on this scene, the more I cried, "unworthy am I!"

While I drove I began to sing and write the words to the song on the following page. As I wrote I was reminded of the verse in Romans 5:9 - *"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him"* (NKJ). I am not worthy of God's divine grace, but through the blood of Jesus Christ and my obedience to Him... God has counted me worthy. Thus I must come to the same mind set as the apostle Paul: *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20, NKJ).

Praise God for making a Way possible that we might be worthy! The Way is through the precious blood of the Lamb! Have you been crucified with Christ? Have you died to yourself, that Christ may live within you?

♦ ♦ ♦

Evangelist of the Church at Brookfield, MO

EMOTION (Continued from page 5)

ency that is bred doesn't spew forth evil violently at us, but rather seeps through the ground under us so slowly we don't realize it until we're up to our elbows in it, and then we wonder how it happened.

Consider these thoughts brought forth in love and concern. Love for all of us in our singular battle to attain the goal of heaven, and concern we all can fight a better fight. My challenge to myself is to be more expressive, spontaneous and sincerely thankful in my worship to God. In doing so, let us take to our heart more words from David from PSALMS 92:1-2: *"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, o most high. To show forth thy loving kindness in the morning and thy faithfulness every night"*.

May God bless us all, and us capable of using his blessings.

♦ ♦ ♦

Member of Chapel Glen Church of Christ

inside...

Freedom or Bondage
First and Last
But We Don't Hoping

by Richard Garth
by Leta Richardson
by Eric Owens

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