

## FORGIVEN, BUT THE SCARS REMAIN

*Galatians 5:1: "...It was for freedom that Christ set us free..."*

*Romans 6:7: "...For he who has died is freed from sin..."*

*Romans 8:2: "...For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free..."*

*Romans 8:31, 32: "...What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?..."*

*John 8:32: "...And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free..."*

*John 8:36: "...If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed..."*

**Introduction:** There seems to be a contradiction when the word "freedom" is used and then the phrase of "being told what to do." How can one be free if he/she is still told what to do? The Christian has been freed from enslavement to Satan, to sin and to being condemned to Hell and he/she is free to live being able to choose what kind of life to live and whom to listen to. However, the Christian is also under the guide, hand, rule of Almighty God, through the Lord Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit. So the Christian is free but also accountable to God.

### I. GOD'S GRACE HAS SET THE CHRISTIAN FREE FROM HAVING TO LIVE IN SIN

1. *"...What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?..." (Romans 6:1)*
2. Sadly, many Christians fail to continue to live in their God-given freedom. They choose sin as their master. In some thinking, "they've gone back to the prison..."
3. Many Christians are so sin conscious, afraid that they are going to sin, live in fear and are still under the domination of sin, instead of living with the positive things of serving the Lord and enjoying the liberty God's Grace has given them.
  - When children are old enough to get driver's license, do parents spend a lot of time telling their children that they are going to have a wreck and proceed to instruct them in what they need to do in calling the police, wrecker, and insurance company?
  - That's how some Christians live, like they are going to sin any minute and that only ensures the fact that they will sin. Accidents are not normal, neither is sin for the Christian.
4. Then there are those who say, "...live it up, do what you want, grace will cover it all up..."
  - To have this attitude about Grace is to live a very confused life, get hurt, confuse and hurt others, especially the Lord.
  - Grace is a privilege to be enjoyed and protected, not a license to do whatever we want.

### II. GOD HAS GIVEN WARNINGS ABOUT LIVING UNDER HIS GRACE

1. How the Christian lives, depends upon the "Master" he/she chooses, giving two alternatives.
  - Choose sin and death results
  - Choose obedience and righteousness happens.
  - Everyday Christians choose one or the other, right or wrong, sin or obedience.

2. Before Grace came, everyone was slaves to Satan and sin, enslaved to wrong, lawlessness, selfishness, wicked and impure motives.
  - But Jesus Christ has freed those who believe in Him, leaving them free to choose. It is God's Grace that makes "choice" possible, gives us the freedom to choose, to decide and allows us to leave Satan's prison or return to it.
  
3. To choose righteousness brings a lifestyle marked by God's blessings, stability and strength.
  - **Romans 6:17-18)**
  - What if a Christian, who knows better, chooses to go back into sin, deciding to disobey God, which he/she is free to do, and ignores the voice of the Holy Spirit, refuses to acknowledge wrong, chooses to walk contrary to the teachings of God's Word?
    - That person's life becomes tossed around and around, going deeper and deeper into and becoming less sensitive to sin until he/she is "sucked into a black hole" of waywardness of misery and alienation from God.
  - When Christians get like that, Paul described them in **1 Corinthians 11:30: "...For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep..."**
  - Refusing to confess and repent of sin will usually bring pain, problems and even a premature physical death.
  
4. Grace never means Christians are free to live any way they wish and still have the relationship with God that God wants and they need.
  - Grace means the Christian is free to choose righteousness or disobedience - blessings or consequences such as mental anguish, guilty conscience, hurting and offending others in the Christian family and bringing reproach upon the name of Jesus Christ.
  
5. Christians need to remember that sin begets sin.
  - The first time is with hesitation, conscience. The second time is easier, do it again and it becomes effortless. Sin loses its terror and the Christian begins to rationalize it away.

### III. GOD GRANTS THE CHRISTIAN GRACE TO CHOOSE (*Colossians 1:10-12*)

1. The Christian should never hide behind the Grace of God as a cover for disobedience.
  - Grace is not some "spiritual" medication that will fix one's sinfulness.
  - Free to choose, yes, but whatever the Christian chooses, the consequences will also have to be received/taken.
  
2. Grace does allow the Christian back into fellowship with God, IF the Christian deals with his/her sins seriously by repenting of them and getting back into God's will.

### IV. CHRISTIANS NEED A "MASTER" (*Romans 6:19-23*)

1. Christians don't do very well by themselves with life's pressures, temptations and God made people for Him to be in charge.
  - **Romans 6:19-21:** Christians need to make the right choice all the time.
  - **Romans 6:22-23:** Christians need to focus on what the benefits of God's Grace really are.

- Freed from sin and Satan's enslavement.
  - A member of God's Family.
  - A life of freedom and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
  - The eternal destination of heaven with a home awaiting.
2. The alternative of Christians letting God be in charge is to return to captivity to Satan and sin.
    - An instant breakdown of fellowship with God, His hand removed that protected and blessed.
    - The misery of a guilty conscience, knowing that others have been hurt, loss of personal integrity, spiritual growth stopped, reproach to one's Church family and to the name of Jesus Christ and insult and injury to one's local Church.
  3. In Grace, the Christian is free to choose either path. The path of righteousness with eternal benefits or the path of disobedience with it's immediate wages of sin.

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. God's Grace does indeed remove the Christian from the grasps of Satan and sin and giving freedom, but disobedience always leaves it's scars on the Christian. Forgiven, yes, but the scars of that disobedience will remain.
2. Who does not have a scar somewhere on his/her body from an injury, an accident or surgery?  
The event is over, recovery has been made, but there is the scar to remind of what happened.  
Thus it is with the Christian and sin. Sin leaves it's scars.
3. Grace frees the Christian to choose.
  - Walk with God, draw strength from Him from day to day or walk away from God, back to sin and Satan and suffer the consequences and scars that will surely come.
4. Christian, whenever you are tempted to disobey God and go back into sin, remember this:  
"Grace invites you to return and find forgiveness, BUT, Grace won't erase the scars and consequences that always accompany sin.