

In Galatians 5 Paul says the same thing in the words “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.” There he describes the problem in terms of our “sinful nature.” This again shows that the problem is not just individual acts but a power or principle inside of us. This is the condition we are all born in and only changes when in the words of Jesus in John 3:3 we are “born again.” The old nature does not disappear completely but as we live by the Spirit we can have the fruit of the Spirit expressed through us rather than the acts of the sinful nature.



This freedom includes release from the penalty our sins deserve Romans 6:23, the condemnation they would have brought Romans 8:1 and the guilty conscience they often subject us to Hebrews 10: 22. If we think we can achieve all this ourselves by our own efforts then Galatians 3 warns us we are “under a curse.” This refers to the judgment that the law pronounces on everyone who fails to obey it perfectly in every detail. Although he was the one person in all of history who obeyed the law in every detail and with joy Jesus chose to take the curse that should have fallen on others.



Freedom from the slavery of sin, an inherent sinful nature, the penalty, afflicted conscience and judgment of the law sin brings and all freely offered in Jesus. It makes me want to give thanks and pray for myself and others. How about you?

Arthur Whillans, Volunteer Chaplain

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” John 8:36

I saw a trailer for a TV documentary and because it was about prisons it caught my attention. One clip was of a man saying something like “No one tells me what to do. I do what I want.” That was his idea of freedom. Apart from the sadness I felt for him and the horror at the idea of living life doing “what I want” it did not escape my attention that he was in prison! There are more ways of being in prison, of course, than being behind bars. Many things like addictions, habits, fear, pride, unforgiveness, past mistakes and even memories can hold us captive without the need for bars, locks and keys. The message of the gospel, the teaching of the whole New Testament and the testimony of many ordinary people is that Jesus can set us free!



To experience this freedom however we need to first realise just how much we need it. In the words before the great statement above Jesus makes it clear that our problem is much deeper than the mistakes we make or our occasional bad thoughts and actions. He says “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin.” We all know that everyone sins so Jesus is saying that everyone is a slave of sin. The problem then is not only the bad things we do but a power that is underneath in our hearts that causes us to do those bad things. This slavery is deep, strong, is true of all of us and there is no religion in the world that can set us free from it. Jesus says he can set us free, free indeed and he is the only one who can do this.

September 2018

1. Pray for T and P, who were recently released from HMP Manchester, and were anxious about this.
2. Pray for M, whose young son has died following a long illness.
3. Pray for K, whose child has been adopted and who is struggling to come to terms with this.
4. Pray for M who will be released tomorrow, and is fearful about life outside and for A, who is due to be released from Styal soon; that she will be supported in the community.
5. Buckley Hall chaplaincy are undertaking the "Character Study" programme; pray for insight and progress for all who take part.
6. Pray for C, who has recently come to the Lord, that he will be encouraged to continue with Him, for L who is growing in faith, and for B who wishes to change his religion to Christian but still needs to understand that it is more than filling out a form.
7. Praising God for all the lives being transformed by the work of the Message Trust, please pray for fruit that lasts beyond the gate and into the community in the lives of the women and men they support and for resources and individuals to stand with them in order that they will be able to extend their work.
8. Pray for K, T and A, elderly men who are new to prison.
9. C's daughter has been diagnosed with cancer; pray for C, for his daughter and for those treating her.
10. A has stopped taking his medication and seems to be on a downward spiral; pray that with God's grace he will escape this negative path.
11. B is approaching his release this month, but his father is expected to die very soon; pray for B and his family at this time.
12. Pray for those participating in the next Sycamore Tree Victim Awareness course at HMP Styal.
13. Pray for D, who is now in the community and struggling to overcome addiction; that he may be granted the strength to continue his efforts and find healing, and for another D who is still in prison, and has a sincere faith but a weakness for drugs.
14. The Message Enterprise Centre have a number of vacancies for Christian men and women who have recently left prison or are about to; pray that the right people will be reached to take up these opportunities.

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15. Pray for C, a very destructive prisoner who self-harms and causes a lot of disruption in the prison, that he may experience the peace of God.
16. Pray for the visit of The Rev'd Paul Cowley (who heads Alpha's ex-offender work) to Buckley Hall taking place tomorrow; that those who hear his story will be inspired.
17. Pray for D, who has been diagnosed with a terminal illness and been given a very poor prognosis.
18. P is continuing to struggle with his addiction to spice; please continue to pray for healing and deliverance for him.
19. Pray for F, who is going into rehab; for her continued success on this journey.
20. Pray for B, whose dad is terminally ill.
21. B has come to terms with some of his past losses, but is experiencing pain in his knee. Give thanks for his progress, and pray for healing.
22. B's brother has died very suddenly; pray that B will find comfort, healing and peace.
23. Pray for those prisoners who have been recently confirmed in faith, but who are struggling with everyday life; that God will guide them and give them strength.
24. Pray for all prison officers, for their protection and also for care and compassion as they seek to do their difficult jobs.
25. L is seeking bereavement support and counselling; pray that she will be able to get the support that she needs to come to terms with loss.
26. Pray for J, who has been engaging with GMCC, that he will find employment and permanent accommodation.
27. B is very angry because he is not going to be released when he thinks he should be; pray that he will accept his situation and manage his anger safely.
28. J is in need of help with issues around parole; pray that he will experience God's peace.
29. Pray for D, as he approaches the first anniversary of his dad's death.
30. Pray for all families of prisoners, who themselves suffer their own losses and difficulties.