

Whose captive are you?

“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is only one body and only one Spirit- just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of us all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

Ephesians 4: 1-6

Recently I was talking to a guy who was very concerned about what the devil was doing. There was a lot of fear and concern in his voice. As I counseled him to refocus his thinking energy on the Author of life, I noticed a difference in his countenance. It didn't last long. Days later I was in another conversation with him about how people were disappointing and letting him down. Again, my efforts were to refocus him on the One who could save him. He wanted help real bad and set his heart on looking to Jesus. That is where freedom comes from. Freedom is a virtue of following Christ. Freedom is a condition of trusting in a Savior. Freedom is choosing to live like a new creation.

Paul warns us in Galatians 5: 1 & 14-15, “It is for freedom that Christ set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yoke of slavery. You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge in the sinful nature; rather serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Freedom must be subjected to God's commands. Freedom that is not led by the Spirit is not long lived. The yoke of captivity is soon a heavy weight around the heart and we find ourselves wondering how we got back in the mess that we had been delivered from, mainly, fear.

Paul is writing this letter from prison and he has one or two Roman guards standing near his cell, watching to make sure he remains captive. Even though he is a prisoner of Rome awaiting trial, he speaks of a higher realm where there is a King who rules in his life and has made him a captive to truth. Listen to these words, “...there is one God and Father of us all, who is over all and through all and in all.” I don't care who says they are in charge, God the Father is the Supreme Ruler over all authority and any dominion on earth or in the spirit world. To captivate your little mind to His will is to live in freedom. And if we are to remain free, then we need to walk in His number one command, LOVE. Love God, love one another and love your neighbor. To not do so is to put yourself under the yoke of captivity. All of us were meant to be under His authority. We were born again to be obedient to His will. Our freedom was purchased so that we could be released from the schizophrenic rule of a madman. Satan is divisive in everything he does. God is One. He is rock solid. When we humble ourselves under His mighty hand, He restores dignity to our lives. We no longer behave in selfish ways, we live a life of love and cast out all fear.