

4 Sunday after Pentecost The spiritual freedom which we have in Christ

Deut. 5:12-15

Psalm 15

2 Cor. 3:7-18

Mark 2:23-3:6

Good morning, dear congregation. On this 4th Sunday after Pentecost, we come together to explore a profound and liberating truth: "The Spiritual Freedom We Have in Christ." This theme invites us to delve into the essence of what it means to be truly free in Christ, transcending the physical and entering the realm of the spiritual. We will examine the scriptures from Deuteronomy, Psalms, 2 Corinthians, and the Gospel of Mark, seeking to understand and embrace the full scope of the freedom Christ offers.

Understanding Spiritual Freedom

Spiritual freedom in Christ is a state of liberation from the bondage of sin, guilt, and the law. It is the freedom to live a life led by the Spirit, in harmony with God's will, and in the fullness of His grace. This freedom is not about doing whatever we please, but about being free from the power of sin and the condemnation of the law. It is a freedom that empowers us to love, serve, and glorify God with our whole being.

The Gift of Rest (Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

Deuteronomy 5:12-15 reminds us of the importance of observing the Sabbath, a day of rest ordained by God. "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God" (Deuteronomy 5:12-14). This commandment is not merely a rule to follow but a gift of freedom. It is a reminder that we are not slaves to our work, but children of God who are granted rest and renewal. In this context, spiritual freedom means embracing the rest that God provides. Just as the Israelites were freed from physical slavery in Egypt, we are freed from the spiritual slavery of sin and restlessness. Observing the Sabbath is an act of trust in God's provision and a celebration of the freedom we have in Him.

A Life of Integrity (Psalm 15)

Psalm 15 provides a portrait of a life lived in integrity and righteousness. "O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart" (Psalm 15:1-2). The psalmist describes the characteristics of those who live in God's presence: truthfulness, justice, and a heart free from deceit. This psalm points to the spiritual freedom found in a life of integrity. When we live according to God's principles, we experience freedom from the inner turmoil that comes from deceit, injustice, and wrongdoing. Spiritual freedom in Christ enables us to live authentically, aligning our actions with our beliefs, and enjoying the peace that comes from a clear conscience.

The Veil Removed (2 Corinthians 3:7-18)

In 2 Corinthians 3:7-18, Paul contrasts the old covenant of the law with the new covenant of the Spirit. He describes how Moses' face was veiled to hide the fading glory of the old covenant. In contrast, "when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Corinthians 3:16-17). This passage highlights the transformative power of spiritual freedom in Christ. The law, with its rules and regulations, brought a limited and fading glory. But in Christ, we are transformed by the Spirit into the image of God with ever-increasing glory. Spiritual freedom means living in the fullness of the Spirit, free from the condemnation of the law, and being transformed into Christ's likeness.

Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-3:6)

The Gospel of Mark 2:23-3:6 presents two stories that illustrate Jesus' authority over the Sabbath and His mission to bring true freedom. In the first story, Jesus' disciples pluck grain on the Sabbath, and the Pharisees challenge Him. Jesus responds, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28). In the second story, Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, defying the Pharisees' rigid interpretation of the law. Jesus asks, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4). By healing the man, Jesus demonstrates that true Sabbath observance is about liberation and life, not legalistic restrictions. These stories underscore the spiritual freedom we have in Christ. Jesus, as the Lord of the Sabbath, redefines it as a day of grace and healing. Spiritual freedom means living under Christ's lordship, experiencing His grace, and participating in His mission of bringing life and wholeness to others.

Theologically, spiritual freedom in Christ is rooted in the concept of redemption. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has liberated us from the bondage of sin and the power of death. This freedom is both a present reality and a future hope. It is present in our daily walk with Christ, as we experience His grace and transformation. It is a future hope as we look forward to the complete restoration of all things in God's kingdom. Living in this freedom involves a continuous process of surrendering to the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to guide and transform us. It means rejecting the false freedoms offered by the world—freedoms that lead to bondage—and embracing the true freedom found in Christ. This freedom empowers us to live boldly for God, loving and serving others, and proclaiming the good news of liberation in Christ.

Conclusion

As we reflect on the spiritual freedom we have in Christ, let us remember that it is a precious gift that calls us to a life of rest, integrity, transformation, and grace. Through the scriptures, we have seen how God provides rest, calls us to live righteously, transforms us by His Spirit, and redefines our understanding of freedom through Jesus Christ. May we embrace this freedom with gratitude and joy, living lives that reflect the grace and truth of our Lord. Let us be agents of His freedom, sharing the good news with a world that desperately needs to hear it.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the spiritual freedom we have in Christ. Thank You for freeing us from the bondage of sin and the condemnation of the law. Help us to live in the fullness of this freedom, embracing Your rest, walking in integrity, being transformed by Your Spirit, and sharing Your grace with others. Lord, we lift up those who are still bound by sin and fear. We pray for their liberation and for the revelation of Your love and grace in their lives. Strengthen us as a church to be bold witnesses of Your freedom, offering hope and healing to those in need. May Your Spirit guide us daily, transforming us into the likeness of Christ, and empowering us to live for Your glory. In the name of Jesus, our Redeemer and Lord, we pray. Amen.

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