

Knowing Freedom in the Storm

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Scriptures:

Ephesians 3:12
Matthew 6:24
Matthew 28:20
Philippians 1:21
Psalm 119:45-48
2 Timothy 1:7
Ephesians 3:10-12

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. (Ephesians 3:12)

As I write this devotional almost every nation in the world is on lock down because of the devastating spread of the COVID19 virus which continues to claim far too many lives, leaving deep grief and fear in its wake. Most people are imprisoned in their own homes, whilst others risk their lives as they continue to care for a growing number of very sick and dying people. The world has come to a standstill, and crippling fear has gripped many. Even Christians are not exempt, many fearing for their family or lack of jobs and income. Supermarket shelves are left empty and the biggest fear of all is wondering whether this nightmare will ever end!

This leads me to ask whether we can ever be truly free this side of Heaven? As my thoughts raced on I found many verses in Scripture that speak of knowing freedom in Christ, but is it possible to ever be free this side of Heaven? Many unbelievers to whom I've witnessed have said they don't want to believe in God because He demands they give up things they love doing and they want to be FREE to do as they like.

My search for an answer began with the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:24
"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Therefore, if we are not Christ followers, we may think we have freedom to do whatever we like, but Jesus' warning is clear – if we don't serve Him then we serve Satan!

So what does true freedom in Christ really mean? Once again I found the answer in Scripture. Two things have power over our lives – SIN and FEAR.

SIN has the power to destroy both our earthly and eternal life.

FEAR holds us captive and cripples our emotions in this life.

The good news is that Jesus came to destroy these two deadly weapons the enemy uses against all people. The blessing we find in knowing Christ brings freedom from sin and fear when we place all our trust in Him. This enables us to find joy in all circumstances, and His peace that passes all understanding.

In Matthew 28:20 Jesus promises He will be with us always. Immediately before that promise He commands us to "*Go and make disciples of all nations..... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...*"

This morning our Prime Minister pleaded with people to follow Government guidelines and stay at home. If we hope to avoid catching the deadly virus, we MUST obey the rules. Likewise, if we long to know true FREEDOM in Christ, we must do our best to obey His commandments, to love God and to love our neighbour as ourself. The key to freedom from all that is evil in this world is obedience; true freedom to finding peace in the storm is knowing the One who was able to sleep through the storm, who, when His terrified disciples awoke Him, he calmly asked, "*Why are you afraid?*"

Prayer: Dear Lord, In these days of uncertainty, give each of us the confidence to declare, "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain." Thank You that in You we can know freedom from SIN and FEAR. As this storm continues, we pray that many unbelievers will turn to find their security in You. Amen.