

WCF XX: Christian Freedom & Freedom of Conscience

Warm-Up Question: How have you dealt with guilt throughout your life?

READ: Romans 8:1-4

I. Freedom FROM CONDEMNATION

- ▶ How do you define condemnation? In what areas of life do you feel it?
- ▶ How does condemnation affect your life? Does it cause: *Lack of confidence? Self-rejection? Quick to defend yourself? Condemn others?*
- ▶ Read Romans 8:1-4 and WCF XX.1 (right). How does God deal with your guilt of sin? Discuss some of the truths revealed here.
- ▶ What's most difficult about this for you to believe? What's most relieving?

II. Freedom TO OBEY

- ▶ If there will never be any condemnation of your failure to obey (8:1) and if "the righteous requirement of the law [is] fulfilled in us" already (8:4), how does this FREE us to all the more strive to obey God?
- ▶ How are you doing in your pursuit of obedience to God? What should you do if you feel a sense of failure in this pursuit? (*See previous question*)

III. Freedom TO WORSHIP

- ▶ Read Hebrews 7:25 & 10:18-22. Discuss what Jesus has done and is still doing for you every day?
- ▶ How should what Jesus has done already and is doing still lead you to enjoy coming to "draw near" to enjoy and worship God?

What's one take away and one area where you'd like to see your life change?

1. Christ has purchased for believers under the gospel freedom from the guilt of sin, from the condemning wrath of God, and from the curse of the moral law. He has also freed them from the evil world we live in, from enslavement to Satan, from the dominion of sin, the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and from everlasting damnation. In Christ believers have free access to God and can obey him, not out of slavish fear, but with a childlike love and a willing mind. All these freedoms were also held by believers under the law. However, under the New Testament, the liberty of Christians has been enlarged to include freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected. Christians also have greater boldness of access to the throne of grace and a fuller gift of the Spirit of God than believers ordinarily had under the law.

3. Those who practice any sin or nourish any sinful desire on the pretext of Christian freedom destroy the whole purpose of Christian freedom, which is, that, having been rescued out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear and in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.

4. God intends that the authorities he has ordained on earth and the freedom Christ has purchased should not destroy but mutually uphold and preserve each other. And so, those who oppose any lawful power or the lawful exercise of power, whether civil or ecclesiastical, on the pretext of Christian freedom, are actually resisting God. The support, promotion, or practice of such opposition, which contradicts natural understanding or the known principles of Christianity on matters of faith, worship, and associations, which denies the power of godliness, or which disrupts the peace and unity among believers, should lawfully be called to account and proceeded against by the church.

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