

Freedom in Difficulties

Sermon #0962

Study by W.D. Frazee—January 7, 1966

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” Galatians 5:1.

The Christian life is a life of freedom. It is sin that brings men into bondage. It is this world that is in the prison house. It is Christ that is opening the prison and bidding the captives go free. Does it look that way to you? Thank God, friends. Thank God.

Jesus says in John 8:36:

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” John 8:36.

There is real freedom in the service of God.

Now I would like to study with you a little tonight some of the things that are involved in this freedom program. First of all, God wants us to be free from bondage to difficulties. All over the world today there are many people who are in slavery because they are at the mercy of circumstance. They don't know what to do with the various things that are coming up. But the Christian is free. He is free.

Look at Isaiah 49:11. Here is a tremendous truth. It is presented in language that we can visualize. Most people think of mountains as obstacles. But notice what God wants to demonstrate.

“And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted” Isaiah 49:11.

Isn't that good? The very difficulties are to be the highway of success and victory. Now a few comments on this.

“[God's] servants must meet with difficulties and opposition; for they are His chosen methods of discipline and His appointed conditions of sure progress, advancement, and success” *Evangelism*, page 445.

What is the way to be successful? Have difficulties. But watch. Don't forget this. It isn't enough to have difficulties, the world has plenty of them. If just having difficulties would give us success, we would be the most successful planet in the universe. But it takes more than that.

Take this statement here in *Gospel Workers*.

“It is [God’s] purpose that they shall learn to master difficulties” *Gospel Workers*, 1915 edition, page 269.

Now what is God’s purpose for you and me? That we shall master difficulties. Well, a master is not a slave. When Jesus was here He demonstrated a successful life in the midst of difficulties. He lived in poverty, poverty greater than any of us here tonight know. He lived in a home where there were difficulties in human relationships. He had four step brothers, several step sisters, and a foster father. These older brothers thought it was their business to get Jesus to do what He was supposed to do as they view it, you understand.

And while Jesus was loving and kind, instead of that melting their hearts, it caused them to throw extra work upon Him and to give Him the hard end of things. They even abused Him at times. But *Desire of Ages* says:

“He did not fail nor become discouraged. He lived above these difficulties” *Desire of Ages*, page 89.

He lived above these difficulties. Now don’t misunderstand. That doesn’t mean that He wasn’t there in them. Oh yes, He was very much in them. But did you ever watch a boat in the water? The water is the highway over which the boat travels. Right? That water can be very dangerous if it gets where? In the boat. As long as the boat is on the water it can just sail. But when the water gets in the boat, then instead of sailing, it what? It sinks.

Jesus, thank God, taught by the Holy Spirit as you and I can be taught, led of His Father as you and I can be led, recognized in the sea of difficulties with which He was surrounded the highway to His goal. And instead of sinking down in the difficulty, He made those difficulties the highway of success. He rode upon them. Isn’t that wonderful, friends? It is God’s purpose that you and I shall learn to master difficulties.

Do you know that this is the softest generation that ever lived upon this planet? It is getting softer by the minute. People today are thinking up new ways to make things easier and softer. Today we have thousands upon thousands of people who are the third generation of welfare recipients. And it is getting no better fast.

But it isn’t just in those conditions that we see this softness. All levels of society are invaded by this philosophy that the good life is the easy life. And all the while Jesus is seeking to free us from slavery to sloth. He is seeking to free us from being the sport of circumstance. He is seeking to make us men, not slaves. He is seeking to make us men that can master every difficulty. In fact very soon God is going to say to Satan like what He did back there in the days of Job, only this time instead of one man being the demonstrator there is going to be that wonderful group called the 144,000. Would you like to be among them? Every one of them is going to have a master’s degree. But this world’s universities don’t know how to give that kind of a degree, friends.

You and I are in school.

“It is His purpose that they shall learn to master difficulties” *Ibid.*

“You will have obstacles and difficulties to encounter at every turn, and you must with firm purpose decide to conquer them, or they will conquer you” *Testimonies for the Church, Vol 3, page 497.*

What are we studying right this moment? Difficulties. What to do with them. How to be masters of them. How to relate ourselves to them. How to be above them instead of beneath them. How to make them our servants instead of our masters. How to be released from the bondage in which the people of this world find themselves.

What are these difficulties going to do if you don't conquer them? They are going to conquer you. There is no neutral ground. Now do you know there are people, plenty of them, who are fleeing from difficulties? Before I get through this evening I am going to show you where to flee to. There is a place. But right now God wants you to understand that instead of fleeing from difficulty you are to learn to what? Master it. Jesus did, and He will help you and me to learn the lesson. He has conquered so that you and I can enter in to his victory. He bids us if we have become the slave of circumstance, if we have been put down in the dark dungeon of defeat, He bids us go free. He says, I have the key. I will unlock the door. Go free. Be free. Be the master of these difficulties instead of the slave.

“And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted” Isaiah 49:11.

Alright. Now there is another thing that I would like to have you think of for a few moments that we are to be masters of instead of slaves and that is the spirit of discontent, dissatisfaction, restlessness. That is filling the world today too. The spirit of discontent. Dissatisfaction. Restlessness.

Jesus spoke of it in Luke 21.

“Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” Luke 21:26.

Distress of nations with perplexity. Uncertainty. Dissatisfaction. Discontent.

Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30 gave a wonderful prescription. This is the great prescription for the healing of all physical, mental, and spiritual ills. What does He offer us? Rest. Where do we find it? Come unto Me.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye

shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light” Matthew 11:28-30.

Isn't that wonderful, friends? Rest. I like the way it is put here in this matchless book *Ministry of Healing*, page 247.

“When the sunlight of God's love illuminates the darkened chambers of the soul, restless weariness and dissatisfaction will cease, and satisfying joys will give vigor to the mind and health and energy to the body”
Ministry of Healing, page 247.

What does cease mean? Stop. What is the way to be the master of this thing instead of the slave? What is the way to be free from dissatisfaction? Come to Jesus.

“Come unto Me... and I will give you rest” Matthew 11:28.

Oh, how He longs to have us come. How He longs to deliver us from this restless weariness and dissatisfaction that is filling the hearts and minds, the lives of millions today.

You know, this has some very practical applications. Today, right here in the United States, there are millions of people, tens of millions of people that are trying to find rest from restlessness with little pills. Is that correct? I was struck with an article in this month's *Ministry* magazine, January 1966. This is the journal that goes to all our ministers and doctors all over the world. And in it on the page devoted to the medical ministry there is an article entitled “Free Indeed.” It is talking about being free from bondage. It is written by sister Lucille Small. She is the wife of one of our doctors who for years has been a teacher on the board of our medical college. He is now out in the mission field teaching the medical college out there in South India.

This dear woman writing from study and from experience has given us something to think about. The title is “Free Indeed” and the subtitle is “Is overcoming through chemicals pleasing to God?” What do you suppose she is talking about? Why, she is talking about the fact that all over the world today, especially in what we call civilized countries, people that tend to get angry or tend to get nervous, or tend to get mean, or tend to get any one of a dozen symptoms of anxiety, fear, worry, sin, defeat, they are turning to these little pills to make them feel good and make them be good. To make them behave, you understand.

“Is overcoming through chemicals pleasing to God?”

“One is led to wonder whether the popular use of tranquilizers to take the place of character is likely to lead to some unwanted results” *Ministry Magazine*, January 1966.

She goes ahead some length on the subject.

“Is the world being made a better place by treating the people with nasty dispositions as if it is something they are not expected to control, to repent of, to be forgiven for? To call it psychic tension and give a drug removes from the patient the responsibility for his own behavior. What about God’s prescription for bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ?”

“Have God’s promises lost their healing power? The popular practice of tranquilizing the millions appears to of almost removed the necessity for God” *ibid*.

Well, I leave that with you to think about, friends. You and I are to proclaim what? Liberty to the captives. We are to standfast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. I read a moment ago from *Ministry of Healing* page 247. Let me read from the same book just across the page right on the same subject.

“For those who would regain or preserve health there is a lesson in the words of Scripture, ‘Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.’ Ephesians 5:18. Not through the excitement or oblivion produced by unnatural or unhealthful stimulants ... is to be found true healing or refreshment for the body or the soul” *Ministry of Healing*, page 246.

You know, I have read that many times, but I read that today and I saw more in it than ever before. It is right on the point, isn’t it? It is right up to date, friends. And do you know that those who study the thing tell us that in some ways the action of many of these up to the minute drugs is similar to alcohol as far as its affect on the brain is concerned. And so the text is right on the point.

“‘Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.’ Ephesians 5:18. Not through the excitement or oblivion produced by unnatural or unhealthful stimulants ... is to be found true healing or refreshment for the body or the soul” *ibid*.

And then it goes on and tells us that people that are trying to find in this world the answer to their problems will always be disappointed. There is only one answer and that is Jesus. He is the only One that can break the slavery of dissatisfaction, of discontent, of worry, anxiety, fear, and guilt. The Savior’s words “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden” is the true prescription.

Do you believe that? Have you come? Have you found in Him the answer?

I think I will just tell you how I happened to give this subject tonight. I woke up in the night several nights ago. I wake up in the night sometimes. Do you ever wake up in the night? Yes. And I was lying there thinking and the thought came to me, You know, there are a lot of people who if they were awake right now would take a

pill. I was lying there thinking about that and I thought, Isn't it wonderful that God has been good enough to tell us something better than that.

Well, you say, "Did you go to sleep then without the pill?" No. I got this sermon. And I would rather have this sermon than the pill, and I would rather have the sermon than the sleep right then. The Lord let me go to sleep after a while after I got the sermon. I am so glad, dear friends, that we can rejoice if the Lord lets us be awake in the night for a few minutes or even an hour or so. We are not going to die the next day because we have a few minutes to listen to the Lord. There would be plenty of people willing to miss sleep to go to a football game, or see some late TV program. Don't they do it every night, friends?

Oh, thank God we don't have to be in slavery to this ideas that every time you want to go to sleep take a pill. And then, of course, every time you want to take up, take another one of a different kind. See what I mean?

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" Galatians 5:1.

Here is the *Reader's Digest*. What you should know about tranquilizers.

"Millions of unsuspecting Americans are endangering their emotional and physical health by misusing these peace of mind pills"

Why, there was an airplane right here in Virginia that crashed and killed twenty-six people. It was found that the pilot had been taking tranquilizers. And now the Federal Aviation Agency has ruled that any pilot that takes these drugs has to be grounded, and the Army has ruled that anybody who takes tranquilizers can't fly for four weeks after he quits.

Dear folks, I am not an Army pilot. I am not a commercial pilot. But I am at the controls of a plane that means everything to me. And I am so glad that you and I have been told how to be free from that sort of bondage. What do you say?

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" Galatians 5:1.

Now, another very practical species of slavery. That is debt. Turn to Romans the thirteenth chapter and the eighth verse. Have you been made free from debt? Well, if you are, you are a rare specimen. Most of the cars on the highway are not paid for. Most of the furniture in most of the homes is not paid for. Most of the homes that people are living in are not paid for. Most people are in debt. Many people are in debt from the clothes on their back to the food they are eating day by day.

Let me tell you something, friends. Listen to this. You won't believe it. The personal debt of the people in the United States of America, not the public debt, not

the federal debt, nor the state, or the city, just the personal debt of the individuals in these United States is greater than all the debts of all the people that have ever lived in all the history of the world. That is where we are, friends. It is just piling up like a great mound.

Now what does this thirteenth chapter of Romans and eighth verse say?

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another”
Romans 13:8.

Somebody says, “Well, that is old fashioned.” That is right. It is. Very old fashioned. The Bible is an old fashioned book, but if people would follow it, it would save them from a lot of the modern problems. Wouldn’t it? Physical, mental, and spiritual.

Let’s take a comment or two on this. This is one of the things that is driving people mad, friends. It is causing some people to take a pistol or poison and end their lives when they get in a real tangle with debt.

“In your letter you complain of the yoke of debt. But there is no excuse for your being in debt ... When you can stand forth a free man again, owing no man anything, you will have achieved a great victory” *Counsels on Stewardship*, pages 256, 257.

Stand forth a what? A free man. Why, the Bible says:

“The borrower *is* servant to the lender” Proverbs 22:7.

Well, then most people today are what? Servants. They sure are. But God wants you and me to be free. Free men.

Now don’t misunderstand me. There are a few exceptions on this debt thing. Some of you can breathe a little sigh of relief when I say that. You can find them in this book. Debt is not the same thing as sin, my friends. It leads a lot of people into sin. There are times when it is the thing to do to go in debt. If you want to look it up in this book you will find just when to do it. But it isn’t every time you see something in the window that you would like to have or that the children would like to have. Read it all here in this wonderful book *Counsels on Stewardship*.

Now back to the text.

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another”
Romans 13:8.

Listen, friends, if God through His wonderful way of life in this message has opened up to you a program in which you have gotten out of debt by God’s grace seek to stay out. What do you say? Yes. And if you are in debt, you don’t need to feel in the doghouse about it, but you are in bondage. You had just as well face it. And if you have lots of other people in the penitentiary with you, you are still tied up.

You can't get out until you serve your time. But thank God there is time off for good behavior. You can shorten the process and the Lord will work with you and help you on this thing.

May I say, some of us would be glad to help you? You say, "What do you know about it?" Well, some of us have learned, friends, that we can live on a great deal less than most people think is a living income. We know. I make no apology for that I am just thankful to God. I know there is a way to live on far less than most people are spending and be happy and healthy, and rejoice in the blessings of this life and the life to come.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" Galatians 5:1.

But now, friends, the real debt. The real debt is not a debt of money or property. The real debt is the great debt of sin. Isn't it? And we have all sinned and come short. Romans 3:23. When somebody comes short what do you call that in bookkeeping? That is a debt. That is a deficit. Isn't it? What are we going to do about it? Let me tell you, we can work our fingernails and toenails off, we can develop ulcers and high blood pressure trying to pay the debt, but we can never pay the debt of sin, my friends. We can never pay the debt of guilt. But the Lord has laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all and He was wounded for our transgressions. Isaiah 53:5,6.

"And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" 1 John 1:7.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:9.

I like that word all. Don't you? Oh, praise God. No matter how great our debt, Jesus paid it all. And if we are willing to give our sins to Him He will pay every one.

Listen, friends, wouldn't it be a foolish thing if you were in debt ten thousand dollars and somebody offered to pay your debts, to scale them down and pretend like you were only in debt five thousand? Wouldn't that be a foolish thing? Why, the only person you would injure would be who? Yourself. But when Jesus has offered to pay all our debts, I think we are in poor business making out that we are not quite so bad after all. Don't you?

Why not admit it, friends? Why not say, "Yes, I am a sinner. I am a guilty sinner. I deserve to die. But thank God Jesus, my substitute has paid my debt. I am free. I am free."

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" Galatians 5:1.

Now in closing a very interesting text. 1 Samuel the twenty-second chapter. I told you there was a place to flee for people that couldn't get out of bondage. God has provided a place. 1 Samuel 22:1,2. Oh, I like this. When I got hold of this, I just felt like singing for joy. It is good news. See if you see anything in it. This is David when he was running from Saul. He was full of problems and difficulties all around, but God was helping David. He was learning to master difficulties just like we studied tonight. He was learning to make the mountains a way instead of an obstacle. He was learning to see difficulties as a green light instead of a red light.

Now watch.

“David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard *it*, they went down thither to him. And every one *that was* in distress...”

Moffit says in difficulties. Everybody that had difficulties what did they do? They said, “I am going down there with David in that cave.”

“...and every one that *was* in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men” 1 Samuel 22:1-2.

That is the way David got his army, friends. Now don't you think he didn't have a lot of problems. That is where he got some of his training. It says, “he became a captain.”

But, friends, thank God, he learned to solve problems. And there are people, and God forgive them, that don't know any better than to scoff some times when a poor soul is fleeing for refuge. People that look on, they sometimes think, “Well, that person can never do anything. That person can never amount to anything. You can never get much done with that type of person.”

Listen, friends, where did David get his army? It tells us here. Everyone that was in distress came. Everyone that was in debt came. Everyone that was discontented, the margin says bitter of soul, came to David.

But now watch, just as I said at the beginning, just having difficulties is not the way to success. We must learn to what? Master difficulties. And these people that were discontented, they had to learn how to be contented. These people that had difficulties, they had to learn to master difficulties. And these people that were in debt, they had to learn how to get out of debt.

David had a training program. He had a medical missionary institute going right there in that cave. There was discipline to it. There was instruction. They had to do some praying. They had to get together. Oh, it is a wonderful program, friends. And God wants everyone that knows Him to be in the business of helping other people.

Brother, Sister, Friend, have you a home? Your home is to be in David's cave. If all you have got is a room there are ought to be a few square feet in that room where you can invite somebody and take these wonderful promises and claim them together and get down on your knees and pray God for deliverance. We are in the liberating business. We are the army of liberation to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. But let's not go around with chains dangling from our wrists. What do you say?

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” Galatians 5:1.

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