

Free In Christ

(freed from the Law, freed from sin, freed from Satan)

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

This is so beautifully seen in Colossians 4:9.

Colossians 4:9 and with him (that is with Tychicus) Onesimus, *our* faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your *number*. They will inform you about the whole situation here.

Here we have a free Roman Citizen, a Gentile believer in Jesus Christ traveling with a Gentile slave, also a believer in Jesus Christ. We do not know with certainty what race the slave Onesimus was. African teachers assume he was a black man. But, please remember at this time in history he could have been of any number of races and nationalities, even from Britain. It is highly unlikely that he was Jewish, even though there were a number of slaves who were Jewish. But, the gospel ends the racial problem. The gospel ends economic differences. And the gospel ends the relationships between male and female or free and slave. The Gospel does not change a person's status on earth, but it does change that person's eternal status. It does not change a male and female, nor rich

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and poor, nor free and slave. It changes a sinner alienated from God to a saint in eternal harmony with God.

Now the great question: what does the Bible say about slavery? What did the Bible advocate? Surprisingly, the answer is nothing. Slavery is not a theological issue. Both kinds of people are saved—slaves and free. People, especially during the War between the States and especially theologians from Africa try to make it a strong Biblical issue. Many attacking the Bible for not condemning slavery. What does the Bible say about rich people? What does the Bible advocate? Surprisingly, the answer is nothing. Being rich, being poor is not a theological issue, both kinds are saved. What does the Bible have to say about male and female? Nothing—both are saved. Being a slave owner is not a sin! Today many people are trying to discredit some of our honorable founding fathers for being slave owners. Being a slave owner is not a sin. Being a slave is not a sin. And for the record, no American ship transported slaves out of Africa. Nor were there any American companies in Africa slave trading. But because of their hatred toward America, many in Africa like to falsely claim Americans were involved in slave transportation out of Africa. Check the history books!!! It is not sinful to own slaves. How you treat them can be sinful. It is not sinful or immoral to be a slave, but it can be sinful how you act as a slave. It is not sinful to be rich or poor. It is not a sin to be gentile or Jew. It is not a sin to be a male or female. One of the most foolish demonstrations of “*Professing to be wise they became fools*” (*Romans 1:22*) is the modern transgender revolution, as though God made a mistake in creating male and female.

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The issue in the Bible is that of how you live in any status that you find yourself. If you are a slave owner---treat your slaves decently, treat them as unto the Lord. If you are a slave—serve honorably, serve the Lord in serving your master. If you are rich, use your money as unto the Lord; if you are poor, do not hate the rich nor be jealous of them. Both hatred and jealousy are sins. Being rich is not a sin, being poor is not a sin.

Concerning slaves:

Ephesians 6:5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, (our status in the flesh is not the issue, the issue is our status in the Lord, who we are in Christ) with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

1 Timothy 6:1 All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and *our* doctrine will not be spoken against

The Word of God does not condemn slave owning but does not condone slaves rebelling against their masters. The Word of God does not condone wives rebelling against their husbands. Nor does the Bible condone the poor rebelling against the rich or women rebelling against males and children rebelling against parents.

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Titus 2:9 Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,

Titus 2:10: not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, (We will be amazed by the number of Africans who will be in heaven for all eternity after being brought to America as slaves.)

Titus 2:12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

And to slave owners:

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Ephesians 6:9 And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Always remember, we are all slaves of Jesus Christ. And if you are going to contend that it is a sin to be a slave owner then you are saying that Jesus Christ is in sin.

Colossians 4:1 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

Slave owners must never forget that they are slaves of the Lord.

I hope you are getting the point that before God, it is not a matter of our status here on earth or our sex, or our race; the issue is how you live your life as unto the Lord, whatever your status is---

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Here are two men on their way back to the Lycas valley, they are traveling together. Tychicus, one of the soundest preachers of that day, and with him Onesimus, who is a slave to Philemon, a wealthy Christian living in Colossae. The situation is a simple one. Tychicus does not regard Onesimus as a slave but as a brother in Christ. The Word of God never gives anyone the attitude of down with slavery, or that you are

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wrong for owning slaves of you are in sin if you own a slave. The Word of God did not take this attitude, even though many try to force this on the Word of God.

Onesimus lived at a time when slavery was at its worst. He lived at the time of the writing of Colossians, about 62 A.D. Now here is what is interesting. By 96 A.D., because of the influence of Christianity, slavery will have changed completely. Slavery will be an entirely different social structure. There will be laws passed that masters cannot kill their slaves, cannot torture their slaves. Christianity filtrated the Roman Empire and there were an overwhelming number of Christians in the Roman Empire and this changed the slavery structure.

So, here is Paul, in prison with enough problems of his own and here comes this slave Onesimus—a runaway slave at that. He has run away from his master Philemon, who of all things is a Christian.

1. Philemon was a very wealthy Greek.
2. And not only that, the assembly in Colossae met in Philemon's home.
3. A slave of Philemon, Onesimus, who was also Greek and a troublemaker. He stole money from his master and then ran away from his master. So here we have a Greek with a Greek slave. Race is not an issue. Race never is the issue in slavery.
4. Onesimus runs to Rome and encounters Paul. So, what should Paul tell Onesimus? For that matter, what should Paul tell Philemon? To let his slaves go? No, Paul is not here to change the

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social structure. He is sent of God to change the spiritual condition of everyone who listens to him.

5. Apparently, Onesimus had embezzled money for his runaway.
6. Question: why did Onesimus not hide? Why did he run to Paul? It seems as though he, like many slaves, feared the anger and reprisal of his master. So, he went to a person he knew had influence with his master to ask for leniency upon his return. Often, they would go to a close friend of their master to beg for intercession. By Roman law, when a slave did this, he was not considered a fugitive slave. Their intention was to return to their master and remain there as an obedient slave.
7. So, this unbelieving slave went to a Christian apostle, whom his master admired and asked Paul for help before his Christian master.
8. First, Paul led Onesimus to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. Then, Paul wrote a very important letter to Philemon to take Onesimus back in leniency.
9. In his letter, he appeals to Philemon on the grounds that he, Paul, has led Onesimus to the Lord as his savior, something by the way that Philemon had not done. In this case, he should welcome Onesimus back not just as a slave but as a 'beloved brother in the Lord' in his house church, with no anger, and no revenge, no animosity.

Philemon 1:10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment,

Philemon 1:16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

Philemon 1:17 If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me.

10. As a believer in Jesus Christ this slave was now ‘useful’ for Paul and for his master.

Philemon 1:11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me."

11. Therefore, Paul requests that Philemon receive Onesimus and then send him back to Paul so that he could help Paul in his ministry.

Philemon 1:12 I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart,

Philemon 1:13 whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel;

Philemon 1:14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will. (so much for Calvinism)

12. Philemon grants Paul's request and indeed sent Onesimus to join Paul in his ministry.
13. Paul will send Onesimus back to his master – carrying the letter to Colossians along with Tychicus (Colossians 4:7). A freeman and a slave, both believers in Jesus Christ. Onesimus is still a slave. Paul did not encourage Philemon to set him free.
14. While Paul presented a new relationship between Christian master and Christian slave, Paul did not ask Philemon to free his slave or slaves. And Paul never criticized the institution of slavery. And he was under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
15. In writing to the Corinthians Paul recognized there were a number of them who were slaves who had believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior. Paul did not encourage them to run away but to serve the Lord as slaves. Then to the freemen, Paul reminded them they were slaves of Christ. Paul did not in any way condemn slavery or in any way say that a slave owner was in sin. We are seeing right now in America where people are tearing down statues of some great Christian Americans because they were slave owners. Tearing away at America's great heritage of freedom. No country in Church history has advocated freedom

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more than America and yet many are taught to hate America. Taught by the Muslims, by the Communist, by those who hate God and therefore hate a freedom that recognizes Christianity.

16. The book of Philemon is about slavery and does not condemn it nor slave owners at all. The slave Onesimus is carrying a letter from Paul to his master Philemon. He is carrying it as a slave. He is voluntarily returning to his master as a runaway slave with a changed status before God but not before man. Paul encouraged Philemon to take Onesimus back as a slave but to release him to serve the Lord with Paul.
17. God is more concerned with our status in Christ.

Galatians 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Christ is the only solution to all the differences in the human race.

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

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The issue before our God is that we should regard and treat each other as equal in Christ. No one is saved because of their world status. No one on earth deserves to be in Christ. We are all in Christ by a simple act of faith. It mattered not to Paul whether Onesimus was a slave or freeman. In service to Christ, social status makes no difference. Jew, Gentile, male, female, rich poor, slave free and any race on earth makes no difference in service of Christ. All are changed by faith in Jesus Christ and all, everyone of us, are now *slaves of Christ*.

1 Corinthians 7:22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.

18. The Bible clearly teaches there will always be problems on earth until Jesus Christ returns and sets up His millennial kingdom. Why? A. Because man has an Inherited Sin Nature and B. Because Satan is ruler of this world (John 14:30). So, there is always going to be social problems on earth until Jesus Christ is ruler. And even then, there will be problems as we close out the 1,000 years rule of Jesus Christ. The only true solution to social problems begins with faith in Jesus Christ. And then, by continual growth in His Word and living according to God's Word. The Word of God makes a difference in society.

There are two things that have always existed in this world since the garden of Eden. We cannot change these two things, but either one can change us. The Word of God has always been here and will change us.

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But evil has always been here and evil can change us. And the warning is, each one of us decides which we desire, the Word of God or Evil. And I want to tell you something, evil is always easier! Our Inherited Sin nature gravitates to evil and resists the righteousness of the Word of God. But, oh people, the Word of God abides forever. Evil and the Inherited Sin Nature will pass away but the Word of God will be forever. This is one of the basic axioms of history, of the Angelic Conflict. Please understand the totalness of Evil. One part of evil is distortion of the Gospel. Adding anything to simple faith in Jesus Christ for salvation is evil. This is why many preachers who are exalted as wonderful are really evil. They preach a gospel where no one can be saved by adhering to their gospel: social gospel, works gospel, everyone is saved gospel, these are all evil. Then, there is a section of evil that is called sin. Another segment of evil is human good. Another segment of evil is made up of all the systems for improving the world or self-improvement outside of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. All systems for improving the world, systems that whitewashes the world is evil. I hope you understand what our founding fathers did in forming our great nation. Communism seeks to solve man's problems by making everyone equal. Islam seeks to solve man's problems by making everyone a Muslim. What our founding fathers did was to recognize the sinful nature of man, and came up with a system that guards against it and uses it at the same time. Laissez-faire capitalism recognizes the fallen nature of man, and that man is greedy. And therefore, man must come up with ways he can 'serve others' and get others to give him money. It allows man freedom in recognizing that before God all are created equal before God, not equal in IQ, not equal in talent etc., but equal in creation.

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Therefore, any system to improve the world that whitewashes the sinful state of man, and tries to ignore or even deny the sinful state of man is evil. This includes systems to call all slavery as evil. Slavery is not evil before God. Slavery is a social problem and like all social problems can only be taken care of by regeneration and growth in the Word of God. This includes racial problems, economic problems, all social problems.

Another basic axiom is that evil produces more evil. First, in American history, they tried to solve the work problem by bringing in slaves. Then they tried to solve the slave problem by war. We still have racial problems today. And the only way we will solve the racial problems here in America is not by getting rid of all the races but by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Evil seeks to solve man's problems by coercion, and therefore destroy the freedom of mankind. And so often throughout history, Christians get caught up in apostasy, get caught up in trying to solve all the social problems in the world. Christians ignorant of the Word of God often get caught up in a web of evil. And get caught up in social action. No matter what you call it, believers get caught up in working for Satan.

People, we cannot stop evil in this world. We can however 'snatch' or 'deliver' from evil those who are enslaved to it, by evangelism, witnessing for Christ and of Christ love, and by teaching the Word of God under the conditions authorized by the Lord Himself. That is, in His church, in the local church, churches in neighborhoods where the Word of God is correctly taught by a God-gifted male, with the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher who studies and teaches the Word of God. And as more and more believers grow in the Word of God and under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, that neighborhood becomes more and more stable. And,

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as more and more neighborhoods become stable in His Word, the nation becomes stable. Where each individual believer loving as Jesus Christ loves does more in one day than those who spend years trying to correct the evils and social problems in society. Either you believe what the Word of God teaches and in the power of the Word of God or in the lies of evil social reforms.

In Colossians 4:9 we are dealing with a wise mature freeman named Tychicus and a wise growing slave named Onesimus. What is interesting is that it appears as though Paul led this slave to the Lord and in Ephesus Paul led his master, Philemon to the Lord. People, it is regeneration and the Word of God under the power of the Holy Spirit that is going to handle this social problem, not by the slave running away or by the master hunting him down or by Paul leading in social reform.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Matthew 4:4 Man shall not live by bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Col. 1:10 ... increasing in the knowledge of God

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**2 Peter 3:18 grow in the grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**

**1 Peter 1:23 for you have been born again not
of seed which is perishable but imperishable,
that is, through the living and enduring word
of God.**