

FREE FROM SELF

(Luke 9:23)

Introduction:

1. This may seem like a strange title, but the truth of it is inescapable for any student of the Bible. In order to be a servant of God we must free ourselves from servitude to self. Then when we have become servants of God we must continue to serve God and His will.
2. This is the great challenge and lifelong struggle for those who would be saved: we must put to death our will and then we must keep on putting to death our will.
3. Let us consider how the Christian can be free from self, by looking at the commands/principles involved, some instruction given in the Bible, and the ultimate goal of being free from self.

Discussion

I. The Commands/Principles.

- A. Deny self and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23).
 1. Take up your cross = die to self.
 2. Follow after Me = Follow God's will in all things.
- B. This is the example Jesus gave us (John 5:30; 12:44-50; Matt.26:39-44).
- C. This is the example of our Lord's apostles (Gal. 2:20; 2 Pet. 1:12-14=John 21:15-22).

II. The Instruction.

- A. Christians are charged with being Christ-like (Rom. 8:29). In the pursuit of Christ-likeness we must make the mind of Christ our own and then live the life of Christ (Phil. 2:1-13). Just as a seed produces fruit according to its kind (Gen. 1) so too the mind/attitude of Christ produces the life of Christ.
- B. The constant admonition to God's people is for us to submit/humble ourselves to God (that is, allow Him to be God and serve Him), knowing that this will give us all kinds of benefits (grace) in this life and our eternity which follows (1 Pet. 5:6-11 and Jas. 4).

III. The Goal.

- A. Big picture! Sin is anything that is not according to the will of God. Thus, sin is the result when we follow the will of Satan, self, or society! God has, from the beginning, revealed His will to us that we might be free from sin (self-service).
- B. To serve/follow self is to make "self" our god. It is our stumbling block from the beginning (Gen. 3:5, 6) and the root of all stumbling blocks (Jer. 18:12).
- C. God has laid out everything we need to know and do regarding life and salvation (2 Pet. 1:2-11). We only stumble when we turn from His will to serve our own. That is why Paul pounded the reality of baptism in his discussion on the Christian walk (Rom. 6 = you died in baptism and are now alive to God in Christ Jesus).
- D. Christians are free from the struggles/weaknesses of self because we have been given the path and power of God!!

Conclusion:

1. We are here, in the flesh, to decide if we will accept God as God or not. If we do accept Him as God we will submit to Him: He is GOD!
2. When we accept God as God He leads us in the ways that we should go, He watches over us and cares for us, and He has prepared a place for our eternity that is beyond our highest imaginings.
3. But, in order to accept God as God we must dethrone self as god. And, though it is the hardest of things to achieve it yields the greatest of blessings.
4. Invitation.

MORE ON “FREE FROM SELF”

1. Big Picture yet again!!
 - A. Light and dark cannot be together because darkness = absence of light. Darkness is not anything, it is the absence of something.
 - B. Hot and cold cannot be together because cold = absence of heat. Cold is not a thing of itself it is the absence of something.
 - C. God and sin cannot be together because sin = absence of God. Sin is not a thing of itself it is the absence of God.
 1. Sin = anything contrary to the will of God (1 John 3:4; 5:17; Jas. 4:17; Rom. 14:23).
 2. In giving man free will (freedom to follow his own will instead of only God’s will) God gave man the opportunity to sin (to opt to follow his own will instead of God’s will).
 3. The purpose of giving man free will (freedom to follow his own will instead of only God’s will) was so that man could *express love by choosing* to follow only God’s will.
 4. God knew we would not be able to follow only His will and had predetermined how man might be reconciled to Himself (because our sin would necessitate separation from God) and justified (by means of God’s expression of love on the cross).
2. Therefore...
 - A. Mankind’s problem has always been the following of our own will versus only God’s will.
 - B. Mankind’s problem is not in failing to follow only God’s will perfectly, but in not making the determined decision to try (1 John 1:5-10).
 - C. Thus the numerous admonitions from God to walk humbly with Him (Ex. 10:3; Num. 12:3; Deut. 8:2-6; 2 Sam. 22:28; 2 Chron. 36:12; Matt. 11:29; Eph. 4:2; Jas. 4 and 1 Pet. 5).
 - D. To “humble ourselves” = to “dethrone ourselves”. To live as God’s children = God is Father in charge! To live as a member of the Kingdom of Heaven = God is King! To have Jesus as Lord and Christ = Christ is Lord!
3. Therefore...
 - A. Live your life as God’s child, subject, servant (slave!), knowing what awaits those who **truly** do.
 - B. Live your life thinking as God would have you think, talking as God would have you to talk, and doing as God would have you to do.
 - C. That is a life free from self, from sin, and from death. That is a blessed abundant life and an eternal one.

FREE YOURSELF FROM SELF!!