

FINDING FREEDOM - EASTER

March 22-23, 2008

Ice Breaker

Which do you think is cause for greater celebration, Christmas or Easter? Why?

Introduction

Easter is a great opportunity to reflect on what took place on Calvary over 2000 years ago. Although this may seem like a long time ago, the power of the Cross is the same today as it was then. His power is available to all who will receive it, yet there are still many of us whose circumstances and situations hold us in bondage. We continue to struggle to find the freedom we have been talking about over the past weeks. Today, allow the message of Easter to fully impact every aspect of your life, by believing that God wants to free and restore you in every way. Let this be the day of your liberation!

Worship Thought

If you know this hymn, sing it together in worship and appreciation for the freedom we have because of what Jesus did on the cross. Otherwise you may read it together, or sing another familiar Easter song.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er His body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

This Week's Memory Verse

Galatians 6:2, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Life Example

In Holland, during the early 1940s, there lived a family of watchmakers. World War II was in full swing and Adolph Hitler and his Nazi party were in power. Hitler had systematically begun to weed out those whom he felt were inferior, with the Jews being at the top of the list. Many people at this time were arrested and sent to concentration camps just because of their race. Watchmaker Casper Ten Boom and his adult children were not the likely choice for someone you would think of as heroes. They would however, save the lives of countless people during 1943 and into 1944, as they refused to stand by and watch innocent people being led to their deaths at these camps. Building a hidden room behind false walls in their upstairs apartment, they hid the Jews until they could be safely led to freedom.

On February 28, 1944, they were betrayed, and the Gestapo (the Nazi secret police), raided their home and arrested everybody they found, sending them to various concentration camps. While in prison,

Casper Ten Boom, along with two of his children and his grandson died. His youngest daughter, Cori, miraculously survived and spent the next 30+ years telling people about Jesus Christ and the freedom that is found with forgiveness. Often quoting her sister, Betsie, who once told Cori while still in a concentration camp; "There is no pit so deep that He (God) is not deeper still."

Cori and her family did all they could to gain the freedom of those being sought. They counted the cost and realized it was a price they were willing to pay.

Edmund Burke once said, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."

The funny thing about freedom is that it isn't free. Somebody has to pay for it. What a blessing it is that Christ has bought our eternal freedom with His blood. He paid the price that none of us could ever afford. The only question left is will we receive it?

Key Passage

John 20:1-18

Discussion Questions

➤ **FINDING FREEDOM – BREAKING FREE**

What burdens, pressures, or issues do you want to be freed from? What are some ways people try to get free on their own? How does God free us from our burdens and issues?

➤ **FINDING FREEDOM – THE BONDAGE BREAKER**

How did Christ secure our freedom? What did it cost Christ to gain our freedom? What is the result of Christ's victory? How do we practically live out this life of victory?

Prayer/Ministry

Take some time to praise God for all that He has done for us, celebrating Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection. Is there an area of your life where you are not experiencing victory? (You may want to break into smaller groups, or maybe by male/female to pray for one another).

Going Deeper

Carefully read Isaiah 52:13-15; 53: 1-12: This is a prophecy about "The Suffering Servant":

- Who is the Suffering Servant? (Isaiah 53:11; Mark 10:45)
- List the ways in which Jesus suffered. Make a list of all the verbs used to describe His suffering.
- According to this prophecy, how would Jesus have to suffer before He was crucified?
- Why did Jesus have to go through such suffering (Isaiah 53:6, 10-12)?
- According to verse 53:6,10-11, and Philippians 2:6-9, what role did God, Jesus, and each of us play in the death of Jesus? What were the results of His death?
- Read Isaiah 53:12e and Hebrews 7:25. What is Jesus, the Suffering Servant, doing for His people today?

Memorize Isaiah 53:4, "Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows."

This prophecy was written at least 700 years before Jesus was born! He suffered to take our burdens, weaknesses and sorrows. Prayerfully commit to Him all the burdens that may be weighing you down and thank Him for what He has done. Experience the wonderful freedom that comes from the finished work on the cross.

Next Week's Memory Verse

Romans 8:1-2, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."