

Freedom From Bondages

by Lou Sutera

Lou Sutera's sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking freedom from spiritual bondages to experience true joy in God's presence.

Duration: 57:13

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 16:11, John 8:32, John 8:36, 2 Corinthians 10:5

Topics: "Bondages"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of bondage and freedom in Christianity. He emphasizes that those who commit sin are slaves to sin, highlighting the need for liberation. The preacher then introduces Jesus as the bondage breaker who can set believers free. He identifies four categories of bondages that believers need to be set free from: sinful pride bondages, sins of the spirit, human flesh bondages, and the bondage of impure thoughts. The preacher encourages the congregation to seek freedom in these areas through repentance and surrender to Christ.

Transcript

Give this word to you tonight. Let me say, Ralph was mild talking about what he's going to give tomorrow night. Every one of you should be here tomorrow night, and more so, bring others.

He's going to speak on the name of the subject that he's given, he's called, The Way to Live. That's the title, The Way to Live. How do you take these truths, and how do you live in your Christianity? And he's going to show you, he's going to have some funny pictures, you'll laugh, but you'll get the point.

And it's going to take what we've been saying, he says, all the way, and it's going to pull it together to where we grab it, we can see what God is really trying to say. This, tomorrow night, is the most important night of the message, we're just leading up to it. The Way to Live.

Where do you get the power? How do you do this? I mean, this is what you're wanting to know about, folks. Take it very seriously. Now, the other thing I want to say is, if you've noticed that every message in this, every message has been totally different.

Every message has been totally different. Tonight's message is going to also be totally different from what we've been sharing, but I believe you'll appreciate it. You know, we have been spending our time, we've been spending our time in 2 Chronicles 7, 14, I believe my people who have called my name will humble

themselves and pray, and seek God's faith, and now, turn from their wicked ways.

So, we're going to, I believe God wants us to grab some of them and see what he's saying. Now, the message was that once we deal with the spirit of pride, humble ourselves, then God has access to us, and then God can speak to us about some of those wicked ways that he has not been able to get in. You know, the spirit of pride won't allow God in.

Now, when we deal with that, God has access to us. And tonight, I hope this is the night of God's access to us, to set us free from the specifics that the Holy Spirit of God would deal with us about. I'll deal with some, there's so many more that I can't deal with.

But I want to start out by giving you a few illustrations, and I want to ask you the question as to whether you can relate to what I'm saying. Here, a teenager, a daughter of a missionary, a young lady, she wrote a note to us like this. See if you relate to this.

She said, I love my Lord. Good start. I never miss my quiet time.

Wow. I have a consistent prayer life. Wow.

Pretty good start. But listen, the Lord Jesus is not real to me. She said, I want to love him more, and I want more devotedly, and I want to serve him more effectively, but I cannot unless he becomes a reality to me.

I read of the great giants of the faith, how they were conscious of God's presence. I want that. Tell me, what must I do? Can you relate to that? Here's a teenager, a young fellow.

In our meetings, sometimes we pass out what we call expectation cards. What are you expecting God to do for you in the revival? And here's question one. What do you want God to do for you personally during the crusade? Here's a young fellow, teenager.

I want him to become real to me, to be able to understand him and to love him again. I want to believe. I want to believe that he is real.

There was a second question on the card, and the same young person answered. Here's the question. What needs and problem areas do you have for God to meet? That's the question.

Second answer. I have gone to a Christian school. I've gone to church.

I've done everything they've told me to do. But I now even question all the hope and belief I have in God. I want to believe, but I'm not sure how anymore.

I'm saved. These could be theological problems, but let it be as many. I'm saved.

But how can God give me salvation when I question the very presence and being of God? You know what young people... Folks say young people. Teenage. Oh, you young people.

That's right. Young people. That's good.

You laughed at that one, huh? Young person. There you go. All right.

You know what? You know what this is saying? I love it. This is sincerity. This is honesty.

Honest cries for reality. Are you there tonight? Is there that honesty of your heart? Lord, I want the reality of me. When we were in Winkler, Manitoba a number of years ago, we had a joint crusade with all the churches together.

And the night before we started, we had a supper. They put some nice food on. And Ralph and I are sitting up at the speaker's table, about 200 people there.

And after we had the supper, Ralph spoke a little bit as to what God was saying, how we were going to relate to the folks here. And then he turned to the people and he said, What do you folks now want God to do for you? And I remember one man got up on that side and he said, I want to have the joy of the Lord in my heart. I want to become a joyful Christian.

That's wonderful. Another fellow got up on this side and he said, I want to have the real sense of the presence of God in my life. That's interesting.

And another one got up on this side, that we Christians in our churches, we would have the real sense of the presence of God in our life. And I thought to myself, didn't that one hear what the other one said over there? And then somebody got up and he said, that we in Winkler would become joyful Christians. And I thought to myself, didn't that one hear what that first one said over there? And I'm sitting up at the speaker's table.

See, this is the night before we start. We're starting the next night. And I'm sitting at the speaker's table and I am saying, Lord, what do you want me to preach on on the first night? And I think the Lord sort of said, how stupid can you be? Can't you hear? Can't you hear? Hear what? Psalm 16, verse 11.

In God's presence is fullness of joy. And at God's right hand are pleasures forevermore. Isn't that what they wanted? They wanted to be joyful.

And they wanted the real sense of the presence of God. So the verse has it all put together. In God's presence is fullness of joy.

Huh. And you know, some folks are shaking their heads. The question is, do you really believe that? Do you really believe that? I want to tell you something.

If you really believe that, and in God's presence is fullness of joy, at God's right hand are pleasures forevermore. If you really believe that, you would not be and we would not be running for the myriad things that we run for, for both of those things. Joy.

Look what we do. Look what we run to. I thought we believed it.

You know, man, a lot of us, we are unbelieving so-called believers. Ralph said the other night. We don't really believe it.

If we believed it, so much about our life would be different. Okay. So there's that.

Interesting verse. In God's presence is fullness of joy at His right hand are pleasures forevermore. Now, men and women, when I suggest that, you know what? This is the normal cry for the Christian.

Why? Because the Bible says, revive us again. The prayer for revival is Psalm 85, verse 6. Revive us again. We're all talking about revival.

What do you want revival for? That thy people, God's people. Are you God's people? May. Here's what you want revival for.

Here's what it says. Psalm 85, verse 6, the prayer of revival. Revive us again.

That thy people may continue to be long-faced Christians in Regina. Right? No. Revive us again that thy people may rejoice.

There's the joy we're talking about. Rejoice in what? The rest of our lives Revive us again that thy people may rejoice in the fact that the mortgage is paid on our church. That? No.

Revive us again that thy people may rejoice. Here it is. In thee.

In God himself. You see? That's what they wanted in Winkler. They wanted to become joyful Christians and they wanted to have the real sense of the presence of God and the joy of the Christian should be wrapped up in God Himself.

Now, that's what I hope you're praying for revival. That's the reason that we will become revived Christians rejoicing in God Himself. Rejoicing.

You know, men and women, we sing songs, don't we? You became a Christian. Listen to the song you sang. This is the day.

This is the day. This is the day that the Lord hath made. That the Lord hath made.

We will be long-faced. We will what? Rejoice and be what? Saddened? Saddened? And be saddened. We sing it, don't we? We sing, Oh, happy day.

When Jesus washed my sins away. That's when you got saved. Oh, happy day.

He taught me how to watch and pray and live with long face all the day, right? And live how? Rejoicing all the day. And taught us how to live rejoicing all the day. Revive us again that Thy people may rejoice in Thee.

Where is it? Ralph and I go into some churches on Sunday morning and look out the crowd and we're concerned whether we're in the right place. We don't know we're in the funeral parlor of the church. You know what I mean? Wow.

Amazing. What's going on, men and women? What's going on? This is the cry of real revival. It's the cry of normal Christian life.

Revival is just bringing us back to normal. 98.6. You know, somebody said, Our problem is we've been so subnormal for so long that when somebody gets normal, we think he's abnormal. My wife said, We've been so subnormal for so long that when a person gets normal, we think he's got fever.

Oh. Normal Christianity. What's it all about? So, let's talk about it.

What is the truest essence? We're saying, enjoy God. Revive us again that we may rejoice in Thee. What is the truest essence of that? What do I mean by that? See if we can find out.

Truest essence of rejoicing and enjoying God. I want you to turn quickly to Psalm 53. Psalm 53.

Quickly, the last verse of Psalm 53. We're going to just show you in the Old Testament the pattern and then give it practical application tonight and see if we can grab it. Psalm 53.

The last verse of the Psalm. Verse 6. Oh, that the salvation of Israel will come out of Zion. Psalm 53.

The last verse of verse 6. Oh, that the salvation of Israel will come out of Zion. Now, here's the thing. When God bringeth back the captivity of His people, what's going to happen? When God brings back the captivity, that's bondage, of His people, this is what's going to happen.

Jacob shall be long-faced and Israel shall be sad. Is that what it says? No, you caught me. When God brings back the captivity of His people, when that happens, listen, Jacob shall rejoice.

Is that what we're talking about? And Israel shall be glad. Is that what we're talking about? So, if that's the case, we better look at the captivity. Let's look at the captivity.

Psalm 137. Look at the captivity. Psalm 137.

So we get a picture of what it's like. Psalm 137. Verse 1. While you're getting there, by the rivers of Babylon.

While you're getting there. Any of you folks ever heard of Babylon? You know where Babylon is? Any of you folks ever heard of Saddam Hussein? Ever heard of him? That's by the rivers of Babylon. Now, Psalm 137.

They are... God's people are by the rivers of Babylon. It's a long ways from Jerusalem. What are you doing there? I'll tell you what.

There we sat down. Yea, we wept. When we remembered Zion.

We're a long ways from Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst of the river. We put our instruments away.

For there, they that carried us away captive. Ah, they're in captivity. Have required of us a song.

They say, come on, sing. Come on, sing. And they that wasted us, our captors, required of us mirth.

Come on, put on a happy face. Smile. Come on, what's wrong with you people? Come on, do it.

Sing. Sing us one of the songs of Zion. Come on, sing one of your songs.

Maybe it'll start to get you happy. Now, look at this. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? We can't sing.

No song. Now, look at verse 5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem. Here they are in captivity.

Many hundreds miles away from Jerusalem. Because of their captivity. There they are in bondage and captivity.

And they're saying, oh, oh, oh, oh. Here we are. Wish we could be in Jerusalem.

But while we're here, if we ever come to the place that we forget Jerusalem. Here's what they said. Let my right hand forget her cunning.

Let my right hand forget how to operate. If I ever come to a place, while we're in captivity and we're in bondage, if I ever come to a place where I forget Jerusalem, let my right hand forget how to operate. That's a penalty.

And then it says these words, if I forget thee, O Jerusalem, if I do not remember thee, O Jerusalem, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. Phew. Isn't that a penalty? I don't know how you're going to get spaghetti and meatballs in there if your tongue cleaves to the roof of your mouth, right? What a penalty.

This is serious business. You know what? They're recognizing, they're recognizing the tragedy of captivity and bondage. Right.

And they're starting to feel the pain of it. And they said we'll even penalize ourselves if we ever come to a place. And it says these words, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

You know what that's saying? Don't let me learn a substitute joy while I'm in captivity. Jerusalem is the real thing. Don't let me get used to a substitute.

Men and women, I'm probably talking to people in this meeting tonight. You have gotten used to substitutes. And I hope tonight's message says I'm tired of that.

Get me the real thing. That's what it was all about. That's what it was all about.

Now, there they were. God blessed them and finally they came out of captivity. Now I want to show you them coming out of captivity.

What is it like when they come out? Psalm 126. Look at this. When they come out of captivity.

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion. Ah, now they're out. What is the environment? We were like them that dream.

You know what that is? Wow, what a dream. Too good to be true. Got it? What a difference.

Like a dream. We never thought it could be like this. That's what it's saying.

And then, you know what? Look at how it changed them. Then was our mouth filled with laughter. Is that what we're talking about tonight? And then was our tongue filled with singing.

Isn't that what their captors ask them to do when they're in captivity? Sing, you guys? How can we sing when we're in bondage and captivity? Now, Then said they among the heathen. Now they're talking to the heathen. That's pretty good.

Isn't that what your pastors probably say every Sunday? Come on, folks, talk to the heathen. Witness. And you say, must we? Huh? You know what? Then said they among the heathen.

You know, this doesn't look like a forced march. This looks like a natural overflow. A dynamic overflow.

One thing leads to the other. Because of this, it flows. That's what God wants to do.

Ah. Look at it. What are they going to say to the heathen? Then said they to the heathen.

What? The Lord hath done great things for you, heathen. God's got a good program for you, heathen. And we tell them.

And then they said, how do you know? What are you talking about? Right? Well, first we said, because the Lord hath done great things for us. Whereof we are sad, no glad. What is the great thing that God did? They were in bondage.

They were in captivity. But now they've been set free. They have been set free.

Tremendous principle. Now, having said that, let me just give you a quote of Dr. Chuck Swindoll, one of the great preachers in our country. He said these words.

See if you don't agree. He said it is doubtful if there is any greater joy on earth. Think of the world.

Doubtful is any greater joy on earth than the joy of being free. Look what people do for freedom. No greater joy on earth than the joy of being free.

Now, he prays a prayer. And I'm wondering how this relates. Why he puts this together.

Where are you coming from, Dr. Swindoll, in this statement? No greater joy on earth than the joy of being free. May the Lord, here's his prayer. May the Lord free us.

From what? He's talking about no greater joy on earth than being free. So, he's saying if we want joy, real joy, may God come to the church and do some freeing. May the Lord free us from what? From what? Fleshly human bondages.

By the liberating power of the Holy Spirit. God's got to come back to us and set us free from these fleshly human bondages. I hope tonight's the night of that.

In some of our hearts and lives. That you don't leave carrying the bondage any longer. But this is a night of God's freedom.

You know, there's a verse that you have memorized. You don't need to turn. I'll tell you where it is, but you don't need to turn because you have it memorized.

I'm just telling you where it is. John 8, 32. You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.

I told you you knew it. And there's another one you know. And that's John 8, 36.

And here it goes. And it says, if the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. Oh, you've got it memorized.

We need to put up a sign. Free indeed, Christians. Huh? Free indeed.

Where's the free indeed, Christianity? Oh, how we need it. Because everything will come with that. You know what the problem is? There's a troublemaker between 32 and 36.

Verse 32 and verse 36. It's verse 34. He's the troublemaker in me.

Why we don't have the free indeed? We know the truth. And we say the truth sets us free. But we're not free indeed.

Here it is. Whoso committeth sin is the slave of sin. That's the bondage guy.

And that's what God needs. The bondage breaker. The Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Free indeed, Christians. Now, you know, I'm going to be like a good school teacher tonight and tell you, you sitting here already in the minutes that I've talked, you know what you've done? You've learned four things. Did you know that? Oh, you didn't know that, so we have to review, right? Have to tell you what you've learned? Have to tell you what you've learned.

Here's what you've learned. One, rejoicing in God. Revive us again that we may rejoice in thee.

Rejoicing in God is the real, normal essence of Christianity. Normality. Learned that.

Secondly, what have we learned? Freedom is the truest essence of rejoicing in the Lord. Thirdly, what we've learned, bondages in our spirit are basically sinful bondages. You know what, men and women? The Old Testament is filled with that principle and that premise.

How many times, I won't even begin to go into it, we'd have to, if I ever started that subject, we'd have to dismiss the meeting, let the men go home and shave and come back again. What? How many times God's people were in bondage because of what? Sin. Not because God says, about time you feel what it's like to be captive.

No. He didn't. No, because of sin.

Sinful bondages, sinful bondages. Men and women, you and I have to admit tonight, bondages in my spirit are not personality traits. They are sinful bondages.

Admitting as such. So then the fourth thing we learn, the sinful bondages are the things that keep us from really enjoying and rejoicing in God. And the Bible is filled with that principle.

Let me give you just one verse, I could give you four or five, it does sound the same way. Psalm 118.15 says, The voice of rejoicing, that's what we're talking about, and salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous. That's where the rejoicing? In the tabernacle of the righteous.

So now, giving this very practical application tonight, Let me suggest to you that we are victims of so many bondages in our hearts and lives and minds that we don't know the way to freedom. Christ promised freedom for all his believers. And men and women, he's promised this freedom.

He said, the Son shall be free indeed. He's promised it. That was Jesus.

It wasn't Paul, John, James, or any apostle. It was Jesus. He promised it.

And I'm suggesting, if my Lord promised it, and I'm not experiencing it, You know what, men and women? I am settling for less than he offers. And I'll tell you, men and women, when you do that, you're in trouble. I'll tell you in a moment what it is.

One lady prayed a prayer in one of our meetings. She prayed, you promised me joy, Lord. That's what he promised.

Joy that nothing can take away. And then she went and said, and I wonder if this is your prayer. Because you say, you're talking about me tonight.

She said, Lord, forgive me, Lord. Forgive me, Lord, when I settle for less and seem satisfied. I think that's where the church is today.

Filled with believers who've settled for less. And they seem satisfied. But you know what? They seem satisfied, but they are not satisfied.

You know why? I'll tell you why. They've learned to live with their bondages. We have built lifestyles surrounding our bondages and incorporating and inculcating our bondages.

And we have learned how to live with our bondages. We've gotten used to them. Like these God's people refused to get used to their bondages.

They said, don't let us ever forget Jerusalem. I forgot to tell you when I was there. What is this thing about Jerusalem that was so important? Here's what Jerusalem is about.

The homeland. Jerusalem. Freedom.

Jerusalem. Pure worship. Pure worship of Almighty God.

There in the homeland. And now, men and women, when we get used to these bondages, here's our problem. We learn how to live with them.

And we think we're getting along. You know what we're doing to ourselves? We're consigning ourselves to second-rate citizenship in the kingdom of God. And you know what happens? We start to say what we heard in the days of the revival.

If we heard it once, we heard it many times. We heard people say, if there isn't more to Christianity than what I have, I'm about to give it up. Second-rate citizenship in the kingdom of God always takes us there.

It is unsatisfying. And we land there every time. One person gave a testimony in our meeting, and I said, said it better than I could ever preach it.

When we don't have a deeper working of the Holy Spirit that makes Jesus Christ real to us, isn't that where we started this message? All we have left then is form, tradition, the ability to do things right on Sunday morning as Christians, to have everything look good, but we don't have the power of the risen Christ within us as a reality. So, getting very practical now, there's the premise. What are some of those bondages that we need to be set free from tonight? Could you name some? I suggest, I believe I can put them in four basic categories.

The bondages that are represented in this meeting here tonight. Four basic categories. The sinful pride bondages.

We talked about that already this week. And that is represented with the spirit of bitterness. Remember I told you forgiving people is going to demand, you're going to have to deal with your ego and your pride? Bitterness is basically wrapped up in the spirit of pride.

Comes out of that. Secondly, there's sins of the spirit. Sins, things that go on in our mind.

Those sins that are in the mind. Sins in our spirit. Bondages.

Thirdly, there's human flesh bondages. Flesh immorality. Flesh bondages.

You know what I'm talking about. And then, fourthly, there are human relationship bondages. One with another.

All right? Pride, bitterness. Sins of the spirit would go on in the spirit. In the mind.

And then, sinful flesh bondages. And then, human relationship bondages. One with another.

So, let me talk about some of these. Let me suggest the sinful bondage of the spirit of materialism. The spirit of materialism.

The desire, the craving to have. And even when we don't have the craving to have. And those that do have in relation to giving it to God.

There's so much we can talk about that. America is going under with the spirit of materialism. And the church is hurting with the spirit of materialism.

Much we say about that. But let me move on. What about the bondage in our mind and fears? Fears.

What a bondage that is. And then, what about the sinful bondage to the past? The past. When I talk about the past, I'm talking about some things that come way, way back.

Way back. And are troubling us to this day. And we haven't dealt with them.

Sinful bondage to the past. I say, we mentioned something the other night. When folks were praying and they were saying, Lord, I need to learn how to forgive myself.

Do you know what? When we pray like that, because you can't forgive yourself. There's no such thing. You can't forgive you.

That's a bondage to the past. The Lord forgives you. And you don't need to be tied to that past any longer.

You need to accept the mighty work of God's forgiveness. But I deal with people who are living in the bondage of condemnation of guilt. And yet, they've come to the Lord and asked God to forgive them.

But they're still living with the condemnation of guilt. That's a bondage to the past that you have no business carrying. Are some of you there? I'm reading the book in relation to your culture about the bondage of grief.

That many folks in your culture carry over. In relation to the addictions of the past. In relation to the family break-ups of the past.

And not being raised with parents. And the grief that is there. And you're still carrying that bondage.

God wants you freed from it. Freed from it. Freed from it.

When you recognize it for what it is. And be freed from it. And what about the bondage of self-pity? It all comes together.

Because of, you know what? Self-pity. Self-pity. I feel so sorry for myself.

Self-pity. Is the president of the Poor Me Society here tonight? No? No president? What about the vice president? No? I generally get one or the other, huh? Self-pity. Self-pity.

You know what self-pity is? Let me tell you how painful and terrible it is. And have you carried that? Are you feeling sorry for yourself? Self-pity? I want to say to you without going into details. Self-pity.

The sin of self-pity is one of the most damnable sins against, listen, the character of God that any person could commit. You know what you're doing? You're telling God He made a mistake about you. And you're telling God and you're blaming God and others for your situation in your life.

And you feel good doing, feel like you have a right to do it. And you feel happy doing it. Self-pity.

Oh, men and women. Will God set you free from that shackle tonight? How long are you going to live there? What about the bondage to the tongue? To the tongue. You know, the one that's tied in the middle, wagging on both ends? Tongue? Bondage? Listen, just today I saw some interesting scripture verses out there.

Isn't it amazing how every now and then somebody comes along and takes your Bible and writes some new verses in there for you? Huh? Yeah? I ran into a few of them today about the tongue. Listen. In Job.

Way back in Job. Job 5.21. Just a minute. Thou shalt hide them from the scourge of the tongue.

It's so bad you've got to be hidden away from it. Again, in Job 6.24 and 25. Teach me and I will hold my tongue.

And cause me to understand wherein I have erred. With this guy. How forcibly are right words.

Hmm. But what does your arguing reprove? Problem of your tongue. Again, what is in Psalm 31.20. Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

Two verses. God's got to hide you away from this thing of the tongue. The disaster of the tongue.

But I think here's the standard for the tongue. Psalm 19.14. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable unto thee. Oh Lord.

The tongue. I'll tell you. Many works have been destroyed.

Many people have been destroyed. Many lives have been destroyed. Many marriages have been destroyed because of the tongue.

The tongue. And then what about a lying tongue? Not just a gossiping tongue. What about a lying tongue? Hmm.

I heard about a pastor who said to his congregation. He said, I want you folks to. I'm going to give you an assignment.

And the assignment was, I want you to read Mark 17 to prepare for my sermon next week on lying. Because you can preach about the lying tongue. And he said, I want you to read some Mark 17 and to get you ready for it.

And so next week came and they get ready to preach on a lying tongue. He said, how many read it? And everybody said, we read it. And the minister laughed.

He said, there are only 16 chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the lying tongue. We laugh, but what about it? The lying tongue.

Hmm. What about the bondage of the lust of the eye? Men and women, I'm just putting these out. Where do you identify with this? Hmm.

The lust of the eye. What about the bondage of impure thoughts? The thinking. When my Bible tells me that I am to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ in 2 Corinthians chapter 10.

And revenge all disobedience. Bring every thought. Send every thought to the prison house.

To obey Christ. Bondage there? You need freedom there? What about the bondage to the lust of the flesh? There's no age gap or generation gap that I'm talking about now. Ralph and I and our team have had the privilege of ministering in many Bible colleges over the years.

Spent 2 or 3 or 4 days speaking morning and night to Bible College students. And I want to tell you one of the heartbreaking things is to see how many of our young people that were just about ready to send them out to be missionaries and pastors. And they are wrapped up in the bondage of the lust of the flesh.

I could tell you many stories of this. One young man so wrapped up in the bondage of the lust of the flesh. And we were there in a Bible college and morning and night meetings.

And God set him free. Powerfully. And I came back to the city and was speaking to one of the churches about 3 weeks or 4 weeks later.

And I invited him to come and give his testimony to a crowd of about 300 people. I asked him to come and give his testimony without mentioning what the sin was because of pride between him and God. But just mention that he was in bondage of something and talk about his release.

And you know what? He came to that church and he started to speak. And he started giving his testimony. And he went faster and faster and faster and faster.

I thought to myself, if that fellow doesn't stop and take a breath, he's going to drop dead. He's got to breathe every now and then, you know? It was just pouring out of him like an artesian well, pouring out of him of the reality and the freedom that God had given him. Freedom! And I looked at the congregation and I saw people pulling their handkerchiefs out of their pockets and started to weep all over the place.

I knew what he was talking about. And he was just 6 months away from being graduated and going to be a missionary. And God setting him free.

From the shackle of the lust of the flesh. You know what, Menuhin? He wrote us a letter a month or two later. And no professor in Bible college could teach and preach and teach a better lesson on Romans chapter 6 and 7 and 8. About what it means to be dead indeed to sin and alive unto Christ.

And all of that. And that letter had in it from a young man who was telling exactly what God can do and set him free. I am telling you this to say tonight, Menuhin.

Tonight, if you end this bondage, let it be a night of release. Let it be a night of freedom. God set you free.

It can happen. The thing you think that you're stuck with and you're going to have to live with the rest of your life. God can set you free.

You say, Lou, you're getting a little excited about it. I'll tell you. When I'm 80 years of age, it's like my brother, you know.

I've been in the work now going into our 60th year. We're just beginning into our 60th year. We're more excited about it now than ever because we have seen and believe the power of almighty God to set people free from every single shackle that I'm talking in bondage.

I'm talking about tonight and many others I might talk about. And this can be your night of freedom. If you're sincere with God.

What about the bondage to a vicious temper? A temper. I heard about a man who said, before I was a Christian, I had a vicious temper. But now that I've been saved, I don't have a vicious temper.

I simply have weak nerves. That's all. There was a man in British Columbia somewhere.

I forgot. Ralph will tell me. There was a man in there who came to me one night.

He said, Lou, I hear on Saturday night you're going to have a youth meeting. Just the young people. Ralph can't come because it's just for young people.

So he has to stay home. He does with the old people. I do with the young people.

So I'm going to have a youth meeting. And he said, I have two teenagers and they are going to be there. And he described what they look like.

He told me. And he said, when they come, I want you to get them. I want you to get them.

Right? Isn't that interesting? Whatever this get them is all about. I had to do it. So there they come.

And they're sitting in the meeting. And if I have ever seen two young people more turned off on the things that really matter in life, than those two young people, I don't know if I've ever. So I had to get them.

After the meeting was over, I wandered out in the foyer of the building. And there they were. And I said something.

I had to get them. So isn't this a good way to do it? How would you approach this situation? I went up to them and I said, you know, I noticed that while I was speaking, it seemed like you two were so uninterested in the things that I was sharing. And I was sharing about the reality of life.

And you seem to be so uninterested in it. And I was just wondering, what has happened in your life that has so turned you off on the things that really matter? Wasn't that a pretty nice way to do it? I know soon I got those words out. And men and women, those young people, the two, the fellow, there was a girl and a boy, the brother and sister, they, you know what the Bible says in the book of Acts, in one accord, you know? In one accord, I know soon I got the words out.

It's our dad. It's our dad. Isn't this nice? He sent me to get them.

And now they're about to send me to get him. It's our dad. What do you mean it's our dad? He is the Bible answer man in the church.

He knows the Bible from cover to cover. And everybody thinks in the church he's got all the answers in the Bible. But in our house, he has such a vicious temper that when his temper goes loose, we have to run for cover.

We know what's good for us. And they turned to me and said, we don't want to have one single thing to do with our dad's religion. I love it when children get honest.

Listen to this child prayer. I forget this one's name. But anyway, it said, Dear God, it rained for our whole vacation.

You know what vacation is, folks? Holidays to you folks. But I straighten you out anyway. Anyway, but it rained on our whole vacation, he said.

And is my father mad? He said some things about you that people are not supposed to say. But I hope you will not hurt him anyway. And signed your friend and put a P.S. But I'm not going to tell you who I am.

Safety, right? Temper. You need freedom tonight? Fear of man. Inferiority complex.

Almost the same. What about the bondage of circumstances? You're in a situation, a circumstance that unless God does a miracle, it cannot be changed. And you've got to live with that circumstance.

And it's a bondage, isn't it? But I want to ask you, do you have freedom in that bondage? Yeah, there was a lady in one of our meetings in Michigan who had that kind of thing. Her husband was on a dialysis machine. And she had to put at least 30 hours a week controlling that dialysis machine to keep her husband alive.

To make sure it was set just right or else she'd be dead. You talk about bitterness? You talk about? She came to our meeting carrying the bitterness almost against God and her husband. For a situation that could not be changed.

A circumstance that she was in that could not be changed. And her husband, the bitterness he had about having to be on the dialysis machine. Men and women, you know what? And the one morning, I can still remember a Sunday morning when God spoke to them.

She went into a prayer room that way and he went the other way. And neither of them knew they were going. And when they came out, did they laugh at each other and smile? Thank God, both of them set free from that bitterness of circumstances that could not be changed.

What about men and women? Critical, complaining, murmuring spirit. What about jealous, envious spirit? Envious and jealous. A lazy spirit.

One preacher said, I wouldn't get up before 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning unless somebody in my congregation was going to have surgery. And I'd be there at 7 o'clock for the surgery. And his wife was the kind of woman that when she did the laundry, the clothes were hanging on the line by 7 in the morning.

What a situation when God set those two free. Her from an angry spirit because of her husband's lazy spirit. Amazing? What about it? Angry spirit.

Angry spirit. What about it? What about bondage in your marriage? In your marriage? You know, when the revival was on here in Western Canada way back years ago, Ralph and I had the privilege of speaking in one of the Bible colleges. And I want to tell you something.

I won't tell you which one it was. I want to tell you something. That the cook of the Bible Institute had got right with God because of the problem in their marriage.

And the Bible professor, the man who was the head of the Bible department of the Bible college, their marriage was in such bad shape and they confessed it that they hadn't talked to each other for 7 years. Did that wake you up? Oh, they said, pass the bread. Did you iron my shirt? But beyond that, 7 years she was the cook and he was the head of the Bible department.

And men and women, I have thought and wondered so many times, she was the cook. I'm surprised she didn't put some arsenic in the food one of those times, you know. In the marriage situation, the man said, honey, I have good news and bad news, said to his wife.

What is it, she says? First of all, he said, I think I'm losing my voice. He croaks. So his wife says, so what's the bad news? You know what I'm talking about.

How much I could preach about that one. God's setting people free from the marriage situations. The Bible talks a lot about that.

It's a bondage, but there should be freedom in your bondage. Freedom in that bondage. What is it all about in your heart and life? But then, long-standing bitternesses.

Long-standing bitternesses. You know what bitterness is? Somebody said it's anger in deep freeze. Anger.

Bitterness is an angry spirit, but put in deep freeze. But it's there. Long-standing.

I shouldn't have said it. That reminded you and you've already left light and here's some faces and some situations already come to your mind. It's the one thing you wish you could forget and it's the last thing in the world that you can forget.

First thing comes up. God set you free tonight? Long-standing. How long? A bitterness situation.

And then an unforgiving spirit. We talked about it. You know what? I hope you grabbed that one statement I said about an unforgiving spirit.

An unforgiving spirit is an agreement with Satan that blocks God from forgiving us. Agreement with Satan that blocks God from forgiving us. Unforgiving spirit.

You know what? All of this is nothing more than bondage to self. It's a bondage to self. Bondage to self.

Martin Luther said these words. Martin Luther. I have the most trouble with the man that lives within these clothes.

Martin Luther. D.L. Moody said, I have never met a man who has given me as much trouble as myself. D.L. Moody.

Hannah Whitehall Smith wrote a tremendous book. A Christian Seeker of a Happier Life. She said, the greatest burden we have to carry in life is self.

The most difficult thing we have to is to manage to manage his self. Harry Thiessen. Engineer, Dominion Bridge in Winnipeg.

When God touched him in the revival and he gave his testimony so much we say, I was a prisoner of myself. You don't have to live in the desert for 29 years as I did. He said, I'd get up every morning and instead of saying, good morning, Lord, I'd say, good Lord morning.

What a situation. What a situation. So what then is our need tonight? I just named a few of the bondages.

What is your need? What is your need? What is my need tonight? How can I be free from these bondages? I'll tell you. Your willingness to be honest enough with yourself. To face the fact that your non-God enjoyment is because of sinful bondages.

Somewhere there are sinful bondages. And you have the spiritual courage to determine that something must be done with them tonight. We have the Lutzers here tonight.

Dr. Erwin Lutzer wrote in the book Claims of Freedom. Here's what he said. The painful experience of acknowledging your pride and your hypocrisy or having to make restitution, how painful that is for past offenses.

He said, cannot compare with what? Listen to his words. The joy. Are you hearing it tonight? And freedom.

Hearing it tonight? That come to those who then can be filled with the Holy Spirit. We got a letter. I didn't need to preach tonight.

I should have read this letter and sent you home. It says the whole thing in a nutshell. That's a Christmas card, by the way, folks.

That's a Christmas card that Ralph and I got. And you know what? We got it two years later. Two years later.

Have you ever heard of the Pony Express up here? The mail? Huh? We got it two years later. I'll tell you. It was written in December 16th, 1971.

And today's a revival from Moose Jaw. Written to relatives in Owen Sound, Ontario. Way back Eastern Canada.

And you know what? Those people got this letter and held it for the day that Ralph and Lou would come to their church. And two years later, we got there. And the first night we got there, these people come rushing up to look at this.

We waited for you to see it. It says everything I'm saying tonight in this Christmas card. Dear Bob and Peggy from Moose Jaw to Ontario.

Revival. We were frightened at the very word revival. For everybody else.

But surely we don't need it. Oh, how pride sure was on the throne of our hearts. That is, till the Lord showed us of all people who needed revival, it was us.

And a week ago yesterday, we went to a revival in Moose Jaw. I sat there with tears streaming down my face. Once the altar call came once more, we let sin pride rule.

Then there was a message. Then there were more testimonies of what Christ had done for other people. And we saw ourselves as we really were through those testimonies.

What proud, selfish, bitter. And we went forward to the place of prayer. We knelt together.

What happened? Pages and pages could never tell it all. Once we confessed our sins and asked forgiveness from self, from pride, from bitterness, a heavenly peace just flooded our hearts. For the first time in our Christian lives, we really have peace.

God's word speaks to us now when we read it. When we pray for victory over sin, a peace and joy flood our hearts and praise God. Victory is ours again and again.

Now listen to this one. For the first time last Sunday. Oh, preachers love to have people come to church like this.

For the first time last Sunday, we went to church excited about what God had in store for us. Wow. They come like baby birds in the bird's nest with their mouths wide open.

When mama bird comes with a worm and baby birds say, put it in mom. Oh, preachers love to preach to people like that. Now for the first time in our life, we come excited about what God has in store for us.

And as we partook of the bread and the cup in remembrance of what our Savior had done for us, it was as if we were taking it for the very first time in our whole life. Yes, we still need victory in some areas of our lives. And day by day, God gives it to us.

We have devotions together. We start the day with him. Husband and wife pray together.

I told you this was a Christmas letter. I'm two thirds finished. We haven't got to Christmas yet.

But now here, Christmas. What does it mean this year? Here it is. Christ is at the center of all.

Baking. This is December 16th. You should have some cookies by now.

Baking. Decorations. It just doesn't matter.

The only thing is Christ. Our hearts are hungry for him. Our one desire to live and witness for him.

We're so thankful now. This is Christmas Eve. We're so thankful that the Lord gave us first himself.

Christmas. Then he answered our prayer for a little life to bless our home. Doctors said we'd have to adopt.

But God is all powerful. In April, we will be blessed with a wee miniature of ourselves. That's what you cry over, isn't it folks? A wee miniature of ourselves.

Listen. Before, we lived in defeat. I especially, the mother.

God knew that I couldn't be the mommy I should be unless he ruled my life. My ailments and illnesses were sin. Now, it doesn't mean all are, but in this case they were.

And praise God, he's taken it all away and given me victory. Now, is he coming soon? Now, we're going to the second coming in the Christmas card. Wow.

Now, we can say we are ready. Are you? Is he the king of your life? He's the greatest gift that you can have. And this can be the greatest Christmas of your life.

Because you have, like we, the meaning of Christmas in your heart. Christ. Now, you know they have to end this letter this way.

And if I or my husband have been a stumbling block to you, we're sorry. And we need to ask your forgiveness. God bless you.

And may victory be yours this Christmas. Love, Abe and Marge. Should I throw that Christmas card away? I don't think so.

It's the whole message in a nutshell. Can you relate to that? Are you hungry for that? Are you hungry enough to bottom out with God and whatever the Holy Spirit of God has shown you and you know is in your heart and life that needs to go to the cross and receive the forgiveness of God tonight and believe God. If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Every head bowed. Every eye closed. Everyone praying.

Why don't you pray for your own heart? Maybe I touched the issues in your life and maybe I didn't. There's so many we could talk about. But the Holy Spirit in an hour like this, the Holy Spirit is faithful.

He probably brings up in your life the area of bondage in your heart. So, the first thing is admit it. Have the courage to say, yes, Lord, you're right.

It's there. It's there, Lord. And that's where it starts.

If you confess. He knows it. But He wants you to own up to it.

And that's confession. If you confess that sin, and then when you do that, then God comes on the scene. Let's have moments of silent prayer where this whole sanctuary is an hour of confession.

Of that bondage in your life. You know it's there. Bottom out with it.

Be honest. Tell God the real things. And when you do, God's here to meet you.

Go to praying for your own heart.

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