

Life Forevermore, Part 1

by Thaddeus Barnum

Thaddeus Barnum's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in granting believers freedom and eternal life through Christ.

Duration: 29:09

Scripture: Psalm 133:3, John 12:49

Topics: "Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the fallen state of humanity, as described in Genesis 3, where sin and death entered the world. However, the preacher also highlights God's plan for eternal life, which was established even before the creation of the world. The sermon then focuses on the concept of freedom in Christ, stating that through Jesus, believers have been set free. The preacher challenges the audience to examine whether they are truly living by the Spirit or being controlled by their sinful nature. The sermon is based on the book of Galatians, specifically chapter 5.

Transcript

Almighty God, Almighty Father, we are dependent on you today. We ask you by the grace of your Holy Spirit that you would open your word of life to us, that we might behold you in your glory, that we might behold your Son, and that you might grant us this freedom that is ours in Christ Jesus. Lord, we depend upon you.

We need you, for only you can do these things, and our eyes are upon thee, through Christ our Lord. Amen. Good morning to you.

We are continuing our study in Galatians, and we have come to chapter 5, if you want to turn there in your Bibles. This great passage starts with these extraordinary words, for freedom Christ has set us free. Now, I want to start this morning by asking you a question, a question that actually you've been asked quite often as you've come to church, and it is this.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? I ask that question because in a moment the Creed is going to state that you are going to state, as it's been done nearly 2,000 years, I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and Son he is glorified, worshipped and glorified, and he has spoken through the prophets. Now, what are we saying? Well, we're saying the record of Scripture teaches us that he is God. He is worshipped with the Father and with the Son from all

eternity.

God himself from everlasting. The second, that after our Lord achieved this great work upon the cross and his resurrection, from the Father and the Son proceedeth the Holy Spirit to come upon the church and to come upon us. And this draws us to the third point in this Creed.

Who is he? What does he do? He is the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. Now, that's my question to you. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? I'm not asking you a theoretical question.

I'm not asking you a practical question even. I'm asking you an experiential, a real question. Do you know him? If he's the giver of life, have you received this life? Oh, it's that basic, isn't it? If he's the giver of life, the Lord, the giver of life, then he wants us to receive that life, and that's my question, because until we receive that life, we will know nothing of this text.

From Galatians 5, verse 1, we will know nothing of this freedom at all for which Christ has set us free. You'll find a parallel passage in Romans chapter 2, sorry, Romans chapter 8, and verse 2, where it says that the law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death. Set us free from the law of sin and death.

And again, 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 17, listen to this, now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. I don't think you know that verse. Well, it's a good one to know.

Where the, where the Lord, where the Lord is, the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Unless we come to terms of the Lord, the giver of life, having given us this life, we will know nothing about what it means to live into that freedom for which Christ has set us free, and to which you and I in Christ are called. Let me phrase the question another way.

You are living by the Spirit, are you walking by the Spirit? Who exactly, what exactly is in control? Are you, or is this prevailing sinful nature? I want to make my appeal to this comprehensive sort of look at this. It shouldn't take but a few hours. I want to state the most extraordinary thing.

Do you know that before time began, the Father commanded eternal life? That is his purpose and plan for you and for us. Yes, and it says it. You'll find it in Psalm 133 and verse 3, where it says, from the mountain of Zion, the Lord has commanded his blessing, life forevermore.

Listen to how our Lord says it in John and chapter 12. I'm looking at verse 49 and 50, where Jesus says, I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment, what to say and what to speak, and I know that his commandment is eternal life. Listen to how Paul says it in Titus chapter 1, verse 1. Paul, a servant of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, who never lies, promised before the ages began.

Our Father, his will, his choice, from before Genesis 1-1, has commanded the blessing, life eternal. That is his purpose and plan for us, and that is exactly how he started things. The author of life, taking from the dust and breathing in the breath of life, and putting the first couple in front of the tree of life, that they might indeed do what God gave them to do, made in his image, to affect and choose by their will to receive that eternal life, by eating of the tree of life.

What a beautiful picture. However, you know the story. We're about to say this in our prayers as we come to the Eucharist.

Holy and gracious Father, in your infinite love, you made us for yourself, and when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and to death, well, there we are, Genesis 3, subject to evil and death. The life we were intended is not the life that's in us now. Hence, sinful nature is described, and it's not just that evil and death reign.

Listen to how Paul says it. Let's get very graphic. Let's get very specific about this sinful nature, and he does it.

You'll find that in the text that Linda read for us today, chapter 5, verses 19 and following. The sinful nature, the acts of the sinful nature, are self-evident. Listen to them again.

Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, factions, dissensions, and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like, of which I have forewarned you, just as I forewarn you now, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. And that puts us in the most catastrophic place found in the entirety of the Bible, and you'll find it in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 24. It is here that the man and the woman, the first couple, are driven out of eternal life, and the way to the tree of life is blocked.

And you'll find it, listen to the words, chapter 3 verse 24 of Genesis. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden, he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. We do not have, did not have, access to the tree of life, this everlasting life which the Father has promised.

We are left into a world of catastrophic sin, born into a world where death reigns, where the evil reigns, where the devil reigns. This is the nature of this life. But, but even there, the first couple, they've, they've got, they've got the one thing that they need in their back pocket.

They've got the Father's promise, because the Father still, His promise has not changed. He has promised eternal life. And that's why, and time will not permit us, to go into the very aspect of what happens beginning Genesis 4. We, as a people, divide into two.

Those who are the way of Abel, who know that we cannot get to the tree of life, and we're powerless, powerless to get there. The cherubim, the sword, wielding back and forth the Word of God, living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword. We cannot come because of our sin to take of the tree of life, and they know it.

We're powerless. We must wait upon the Lord, wait upon God to do what we cannot do. That's the one group.

The other group are those who go the way of Cain. We can do all things under our control. We are powerful.

We deserve heaven. You've heard this in this day, haven't you? You've gone to a secular funeral, have you not? They've rejected God. They've refused His ways.

They don't want to hear about Him whatsoever, and yet they come to the funeral, and there this person is in their casket. What are they saying? Well, she's in a better place. And where is that? You see, in our arrogance out comes the fundamental religions of the world, all through the descendants of Cain.

We are going to control the story of religion. We're going to determine what's right and what's wrong. We're going to determine how to gain access to God, and we deserve to be there, out with the sword, out with the cherubim, out.

We deserve it. We shall be in heaven regardless of you Christians, regardless of you peoples. Oh, but time won't permit to develop these things.

What will perhaps permit is a little bit of time. Oh, thank God for the Old Testament. Thank God for the people of faith who grew up and said, we can't get there, but the Lord has commanded eternal life.

He's promised it to us. There you see the great saints like Abraham. He saw the city.

Read Hebrews 11 sometime. He saw the country. He saw it.

He saw what Adam and Eve saw, the couple Eden, the glories to come, whose architect and builder is God. He saw it. Jesus would say of Abraham, he saw my day.

Abraham, he saw it. It was coming and down through the whole scope of the Old Testament, and I'll tell you why. How many of you here have memorized Ecclesiastes 311? Raise your hand.

Well, there you go. Ecclesiastes 311, it's worthy of finding. You need to go to the Psalms and then turn right just a little bit and you'll find them.

Ecclesiastes 311. God has set eternity in the heart of man. Everybody knows it.

Everybody knows this life is not enough because God in the Anthropos, in the design of our structure, he has placed in man and woman and everyone ever born, eternity is, everlasting life is, God is. They reject it. They refuse it.

Oh, our Lord had to face people like this. He faced the Sadducees who didn't believe in the resurrection or angels or eternal life, and of course down through the history of time. I've always heard this growing up.

You know this. This is why those people were called sad, you see. I had to get it out.

Most of you would flail me and flog me if I had not said that. They don't believe in eternal life. No, and I'll tell you something.

What our Lord said is this, you are wrong. He says it so emphatically, Matthew 22, you are wrong. You neither know the Scriptures nor the power of God.

You have no idea, and then he quotes Exodus chapter 3, verse 6, where the Lord says, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. Oh no, he's the God of the living, not the God of the dead. See, our Lord has thundered these things from the beginning, and this is why everything in the Old Testament can't wait for Bethlehem.

Can't wait for Bethlehem. I have now comprehensively covered the Old Testament. Let me move into the new.

Can I tell you something about our Lord and those four Gospels? I just want to say this. You see, we keep thinking in such narrow view, but who was it that was born in Bethlehem? Who was this person? He didn't just come to make eternal life available to us, to do the hard work he would have to do, that we might have it. He didn't come just to talk about the kingdom of God, that we might know it.

This is the problem with him. Are you ready? He is it. He is it.

He is the life. He himself is the life. Here's how the Gospel of John says it, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by him. Apart from him, nothing came into being that has come into being.

In him was life. And he said it. I am the resurrection and the life.

I am the way and the truth and the life. I am it. Do you know how hard it must have been to be him? Okay, you don't.

All right, let's C.S. Lewis do it for you, and tell it in a child's language. There is Narnia frigid and frozen, and the hearts stone cold. And Aslan, who is life, comes.

And everywhere he goes, springtime happens. It is no wonder when you read, life himself come among us, that the devil could not stand with him. Sickness could not stay.

Death could not wield its sword. For life had come among us. Life uncontainable.

Oh, thank God when he got to the grave of Lazarus, all he said was, Lazarus, come forth. Had he just said, come forth, they all would have come out, I think. That's what happens when he who is the Word of God speaks, and creation happens.

Life happens. And our Lord came for this reason. He came to be the way, and the truth, and the life, to bring us back to the Father, that we might have life.

He appeared for this reason. This is why he came among us, to abolish death, and bring life, and immortality to light. Life himself died upon that cross, because he is the one that would go in, and he would face the cherubim.

He would face the sword. He would take upon himself our sin, our disobedience, our rebellion. He would face the wrath of God.

He would go there, and when he was done, life arose. And when life arose, the way was made open for us to have eternal life. This is the glories of this gospel.

This is the wonders of this gospel. But I'm afraid I've got to position you here very cautiously, and very carefully, into where most of the church is today. And this is the part that's so grieving.

Many people believe what I've just said to you. Many people believe it. Many people say it in the creed, oh yes, I believe in God the Father.

I believe in God the Son. I believe in God the Holy Spirit. Yes, I do.

But all of it is in the past of what he has done for us. The Father commanded it. The Son did it.

And now here we are between places. Between places. He has achieved eternal life.

He has set us free, but we're not going to know it until we die and enter into the glories of that kingdom to come. Eternal life in its fullness yet to come. And that's true.

The fullness of eternal life has not yet come. But my friends, here we are stuck in this world where the devil is strong, the world is strong, lust is strong. Everything about what's going on in the culture today is getting darker and stronger.

Are you saying it's behind us and in front of us? What hope do you have today? Well, this is the point. This is the whole point. That when our Lord did all that he did when he rose from the dead, what did he do? He came to his disciples and he breathed upon them the spirit of life, the breath of life.

He didn't just abandon us and go into the glories of heaven and say, hope it works out for you. Praying until you get home. No, no.

This is why it's said if we believe in the Holy Spirit, he is the Lord. He's the giver of life. He's the giver of life.

He is the one who comes to impart this new life into us, inside of us to give us this new life. This is why it's said in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 14, it says this, in him you also, having listened to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in him by the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of your inheritance. He is the down payment.

He is the security to know. He is the assurance that we know that we've got that today. That our Lord didn't just say I came that you might have life and have it abundantly.

He meant it. That we partake in it now. Today.

Oh, praise the Lord. And that's exactly what the early apostles, I finished the gospels. I'm going into the New Testament.

This is exactly why the apostles took off the way they did. They were called the people of the way. Well what way is it? Oh, praise the Lord Jesus Christ our way.

A way to the tree of life. Our Lord who is the tree of life. Our Lord who is the author of life.

He is the word of life. He is the bread of life. He himself is the resurrection and life.

He himself is the way, the truth and the life to lead us to the water of life. That we might have eternal life. The breath of life.

The spirit of life. To be led to the tree of life. That one day our names be written in the book of life.

That we might have in that day the crown of life to come. The Father commanded it. The Lord Jesus did it.

And now the Holy Spirit applies it. Do you know something about the life of the Holy Spirit? That's what I want to know. That's where it all begins.

That's where it all starts. My friends, I grew up in a dead church. How is it possible with uncontainable life? When everybody says it, he's the Lord, the giver of life, to be dead? To be dead? How is it possible? I praise God I found myself in a church where the word of God was alive.

Where the songs of praise came alive. Where life began to pour into my veins. Where the Eucharist came alive.

This bread, this cup, life unto us. Finally I came to a place where I myself, because of the kindness of the body of Christ, came alive. He is the spirit who gives life.

Oh my friends, I beg of you to hear this. Do we know these things? Do we understand these things? But more, have we received this born again life? This born from above life? Inasmuch as we have got to be born into this life by our natural parents, so we must be born into the eternal life by water of baptism and by the power of God the Holy Spirit who administers the cross. He administers the blood of Calvary that we might be forgiven and cleansed.

He gives us the power to repent and turn from our sins. He gives us the power to receive this new life that is found in Christ Jesus our Lord. That's what he does.

But we need it. We need it. I can't do my work if I don't have this.

If this is not true, tell me. I can't do what I do if this is not true. See this is why Paul delves so deeply and particularly into the story of what's going on in the churches of Galatia.

Because what's happened is having heard and come alive in the spirit, they're now trying to work it out by the flesh. And once again the work of the devil begins to torment us, doesn't it? Torment us. Torment us.

The world, its flesh, the lusts of the flesh, how much more now? The lusts of the eyes, the strengths upon which we're taken back into captivity. And so many of our Christians are being held in captivity. So many of our pastors are being held in captivity because they're back, they don't know what to do.

And the devil's taken them back to old sins, the old familiar sins. Back come the addictions. Back come the stuff that you read about here in Galatians 5, these issues of sexual immoralities, sensualities, impurities, idolatries, witchcraft, all these things, hatreds, broken relationships, envies, jealousies, angers.

Especially the poor pastors because what's happening is for them, this is the job I have, I get to thank God for FaceTime, thank God for Skype, I get to be with pastors, thank God for the Jetsons who first saw this. I get to be with clergy. What's happening is that everything is about image.

It's all about image. It's all about showing you how wonderful my presentation is and how good a pastor I am, but inside they're isolated. They don't know where to go and they get tempted to do what ought not to be done.

And it's so easy to be caught in these things. And I tell you the amazing thing is this, if I'm a doctor and you give me the ability to diagnose and I'm able with skill and wisdom to diagnose, but you don't give me treatment, you don't give me treatment, what good is it? What good is it? I can tell you what's wrong, but I can do nothing about it. Nothing about it.

Oh, thanks be to God for the Holy Spirit. He didn't leave us alone. He didn't isolate us.

He sent the third person of the Trinity to do the work in our soul. Just one hallelujah for that, please. Do you know what He's done for us? We're not alone.

We're not isolated. There's a freedom that He can give us that if we're in these bondages. This is why we do Celebrate Recovery.

This is why this great ministry is going all across the country right now, because there's an acknowledgement, there's an understanding that the devil is waging war against Christians, against pastors, and here Celebrate Recovery takes us back to the twelve steps found in the Bible. We are powerless to do with this. We don't know how to handle these things.

Ah, but we have a power, the Lord. He knows how to come and break us from these addictions. We cannot do the work of our discipling.

We cannot do this without the unction of the Holy Spirit and His promise that we were not just set free by Christ, we were set free for freedom. If alcohol has got you again, how will you get out of its snare? If drugs, if the internet, if the sins of your past, if fears, if anxieties, if you're depressed, if you're lost, how are you going to get them out now? Because you know Christ, yes, but you've fallen into a darkness, a depression. You don't want to admit it to anybody because you're a Christian.

You're feeling guilty about the whole thing. Well, I'm here to say, thanks be to God, have the courage to confess it to a brother or sister. Come, the water of life is available to you.

The other day I was on the phone with the clergyman across the country. I can tell you this, he was in bondage. He was in darkness.

He was alone. He had suffered such hurt. People who were so close to him had died.

He was rejected from his church. He was isolated. He was alone.

And he called me, and I could see the darkness on him. We began to talk together. And I found he wasn't even attending a church.

He wasn't in the people of God. That's where it all starts. We never walk alone.

Say it with me. We never walk alone. Now, fasten up.

We never walk alone. When we're going through these things, when the devil gets us, we get together. We move together so that we can have the water of life opened up to us again.

We can begin to taste. And I told him, listen to me, I want you to find a church in your area that's got life in it, real life. When the Bible is preached, Jesus is lifted up.

When the Spirit of God is moving, when the songs of praise are happening, the healing can begin. He said, there's no such Anglican or Episcopal church in our town like that. I said, oh, surprise.

I don't care. What I care is that you taste the water of life again. That you get in a place where the Bible is preached again.

Where you begin to feel the movement of the Spirit of God beginning inside of you, that all things are possible through Christ who strengthens me. That a new work begins, a freedom, a taste of freedom

begins. Some addictions take time.

Sometimes the grip of the devil upon us goes back to old times in our life. I know that. And it takes time to work on it.

And I know that. But I also know who gets the victory in the end. Because our Lord has set us free for freedom.

He did not leave us alone. No, no. And where the Lord is, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Do you believe in the power of God the Holy Spirit moving among us? Do you know why this is a place of healing and restoration? Because Jesus Christ is here. The Spirit of God is moving here. People are testifying what's going on here.

That's why. It's Him. It's always been Him.

Moving in our midst. Just we've got to be able to receive. Look at the blockages that hold us back from receiving what He's got from us.

And let Him come. Oh Lord, move my will by the power of your Spirit that I might repent of the things that need to be repented of. Things I ought not to be doing.

Give the power of repentance to me that I might turn unto life and be restored and made alive again. And that I might take that gift of life and let you move through me to those who are suffering. To those who need to know freedom.

Freedom is real. That there is a world where we can say in the power of the Spirit, oh yes, there is fruit that is true. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

You just met a Christian who's free. You'll never know the fruit of the Spirit in your life until you're walking in obedience to Him. And I beg you to do it.

Have courage to repent. Go to the prayer teams. Kneel at the Eucharist.

Ask Jesus to set you free if you're in bondage today. Get on Thursday nights to celebrate recovery. Go back to the past.

Never walk alone. And we will watch the Lord stir in us a freedom again. And the songs of praise shall bubble up.

And when our body goes down into death, we shall be swallowed up by Him. Hallelujah. Stand with me.

Praise the Lord. Praise you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus, for the gift of life.

Thank you, Jesus, for the Holy Spirit of God. Thank you you've not left us abandoned. Oh, Lord, especially if there's any soul in this place who has blocked you and gone their own way, let, oh Lord, the blockage be removed.

Spirit of God, come in power and heal ourselves. Heal ourselves. Heal us.

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