

7 Ways Jesus Sets You Free

When I began to study and meditate on the last sayings of Christ, I discovered that each statement carries with it an important freedom for believers. Jesus spoke seven times when He was on the cross—the number of completion or perfection. In so doing, He secured our complete redemption from every kind of problem we can face.

The powerful anointing released 2,000 years ago through Jesus' last words is available to you—today! Walking in these seven freedoms will transform your life.

Freedom No. 1: Forgiveness

In the midst of His torment on the cross Jesus poured forth an endless supply of forgiveness when He prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34, NKJV). With this statement, He forgave those who had crucified Him, became our example, and pointed toward everyone's need to be forgiven of his sins.

Jesus will pour forgiveness into your life, enabling you to unconditionally forgive every person who has wronged you as well as forgive yourself. God wants to pour the freedom to forgive into your life!

In the Old Testament, God named Himself *El Shaddai*, God Almighty, the Source of blessings. *El Shaddai* literally means the “many-breasted one,” which signifies nourishment and productiveness.

God doesn't just save you and take you to heaven; He supplies everything you need to successfully live your life. He provides forgiveness, comfort, healing, prosperity, and provision for every need. God is revealed as the One who is more than enough.

Freedom No. 2: Salvation

One of the greatest freedoms we inherited from Calvary, aside from forgiveness, is freedom from sin's torment. Jesus saved a thief next to Him just moments before his death, and He is able and willing to save you—no matter how serious your sins.

The thief said, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom," and Jesus replied, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:42-43). In the face of death and humiliation, Jesus freed us from shame, suffering and death. He fought the principalities and powers of darkness and took the full weight of sin upon Himself so that we could be free of Satan and sin.

Two convicted criminals were equally near to Jesus. Both were wicked, suffering, dying and in desperate need of being set free from their sins. Both were only a few feet from the Savior. Yet one died unrepentant, and the other went to Paradise.

The conversion of the one is remarkable when you think about it. He accepted a suffering, bleeding, crucified man as his God—One who apparently had lost all power to save and by outward appearances couldn't even save Himself.

How was the thief able to do this? Jesus gave the answer when He said to Peter, "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). The thief separated himself from death by his faith. In the same way you can separate yourself from things that are holding you back—through faith in the crucified and risen Lord.

Freedom No. 3: Affection

After Jesus demonstrated His compassion for the thief, He turned His attention toward His mother. The Bible describes the scene: "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother,

‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’” (John 19:26-27).

I marvel that while Jesus was engaged in the most momentous and painful undertaking in the history of mankind—suffering the anguish of crucifixion and taking on Himself the sins of the world—He didn’t overlook His responsibilities as an earthly son. Both His humanity and His deity were displayed for the world to see. His words reflect the human love, gratitude and respect He had for His mother.

Jesus gave the example for all human relationships. An important key to our success and freedom is embedded in the way we treat our parents. Ephesians 6:2-3 says, “‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with a promise: ‘that it may go well with you and you may live long on the earth.’”

Once you learn to honor your parents, you can apply that lesson to everyone in your life. You will be set free to become a loving spouse, parent or friend.

Jesus’ disciple John is the other key person in Jesus’ third utterance on the cross. John’s legacy is his faithfulness. Many of Jesus’ followers deserted Him, yet John remained faithful to the end. He showed both unconditional and brotherly love.

When Satan is trying to destroy your relationships, remember Jesus carried your offenses so that you could be free to be in fellowship with others. Don’t take offense; give it to Jesus!

Freedom No. 4: Acceptance

Our freedom from rejection was established by Jesus on the cross. When Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27:46), He took the pain of all our rejections—so we could be accepted by the Father and by

others.

No one but Jesus can erase the pain of rejection or satisfy the need for acceptance. When you are in right relationship with God, rejection has no sting.

You can love others despite what they do to you if you know your Father accepts you. His approval is more powerful and more important than any man's disapproval.

In Old Testament times, before Jesus came, the Jewish high priest performed an annual ceremony on what the people called the Day of Atonement that symbolized God's taking our rejection (Lev. 16:7-22). More than any other feast, the Day of Atonement is symbolic of Jesus' work on the cross.

For the ceremony, the priest took two goats from the Israelites. He sacrificed one and sprinkled its blood on and before the mercy seat as an atonement for sin. He took the other, the scapegoat, and laid both his hands on its head. Then he confessed all the iniquities, transgressions and sins of the children of Israel, symbolically putting them on the goat's head, and sent it away into the wilderness.

Too often, when rejected, we try to make someone else our scapegoat. We blame our mother, father, pastor, boss or someone else.

But Jesus is our scapegoat. He took all the rejection we will ever experience on His own head, making us "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6).

When you experience loneliness and pain, you can look to Jesus because He experienced that kind of suffering as well. No one was there to help Him on the cross. Yet in His aloneness He began to praise God, quoting from Psalms 22, 31 and 69.

You, too, can praise God during your hardest and most difficult times. Carrying rejection will cause you depression

and loss of joy. But Psalm 16:11 says, “In Your presence is fullness of joy.” And Nehemiah wrote, “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10). So give your burden to Jesus; He carried it for you!

Freedom No. 5: Righteousness

The Bible tells us that on the cross Jesus, “knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’” (John 19:28). You might ask, what does Jesus’ being thirsty have to do with freedom?

He bore all our thirst, or lust—emotional, physical and mental—on the cross. Jesus took it all to free us from sinful lusts and replaced it with His righteousness. The Bible says, “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). God wants His children to be free to enjoy the peace, joy and righteousness we have in Him.

It’s also important to understand that Jesus went to the cross as our faithful High Priest. Hebrews 2:17 says, “It was necessary for Jesus to be like us ... so that He could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God, a Priest who would be both merciful to us and faithful to God in dealing with the sins [suffering] of the people” (NLT). Today, Jesus stands next to the Father making intercession for you.

Freedom No. 6: Victory

Jesus purchased our final victory with His sixth utterance. When He gave His triumphant shout, “It is finished!” (John 19:30, NKJV), He was announcing that the battle was over and our victory secured. He conquered death, sickness, nature, the devil and every situation. Because we are identified with Jesus’ death and Resurrection—we too have victory over everything we can possibly face.

God used the events surrounding Jesus’ death to confirm that

Jesus had finished the work of atonement. The veil's being torn in two gave us access to the throne of God (Heb. 4:16). Christ's resurrection provided proof that God had accepted Jesus' sacrifice. His taking a position at the right hand of the Father demonstrated the value of His work and the Father's pleasure in His Son. His sending the Holy Spirit made provision, on an ongoing basis, for the church to learn how to apply the freedoms and benefits of Christ's atoning work.

Freedom No. 7: Contentment

The final word of Jesus was for our contentment, faith, confidence and love. When Jesus yielded His life to the Father in payment for our sins, He said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46). In saying this, He released us to enjoy one of our greatest freedoms—the ability to rest in the arms of our Father God. How blessed we are that His Father is our Father. We can now put our entire life and being confidently into God's hands. We are to follow His lead by completely surrendering to God.

When Jesus presented Himself to God, He also presented us. He prayed, "That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us" (John 17:21). Jesus did this so that we would be safe in God's Presence. Like Jesus, we can have fellowship with God, regardless of the circumstances!

His Death—Our Freedom

Each of the seven last statements made by Jesus demonstrate God's supreme power and His foreknowledge of all that was to come.

"Forgive them for they know not what they do" was a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12: "He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Jesus' statement to the thief, "Today you will be with me in Paradise," was the fulfillment of Matthew 1:21: "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

His words to His mother, "Woman behold your Son," fulfilled Luke 2:34-35: "[Jesus] is destined ... for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

At one point Jesus asked, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" These same words were spoken by David in Psalm 22:1: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

His comment, "I thirst," fulfilled Psalm 69:21: "And for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."

His declaration, "It is finished," fulfilled Psalm 22:31: "They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn—for he has done [finished] it" (NIV).

And finally, Jesus' final words, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit," were prophesied in Psalm 31:5: "Into Your hands I commit My spirit."

Jesus overcame the world to give you freedom in every area of your life—freedom from unforgiveness, freedom from sin, freedom in relationships, freedom from rejection, freedom from suffering, freedom to live victoriously, freedom to trust God! By faith in what Jesus accomplished on the cross, you can finish the course He has set for you.

Hebrews 12:2 says He is the "author and finisher of our faith" (NKJV). He has started you in faith and will stay with you until you have the complete victory! You have the seven freedoms you need to be victorious and prosperous in every way.

Read a companion devotional.

Marilyn Hickey *is known for her extraordinary teaching gift.*