

Lenten Devotional

2020

Saturday, April 11, 2020
Holy Saturday
Day 40, Exodus 40

Free to Worship, Free to Serve

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. (Exodus 40:34–35)

What is the difference between religion and faith, between being religious and being a disciple? Of course, there are many ways to answer these questions. One distinction is what we understand to be the end result of the two. For the religious the end result is ones own happiness and satisfaction. Religion is supposed to be satisfying, helping us and comforting us when life is hard. Ultimately, religion is to serve the individual and a religious person is in the end a selfish person. This is the root of much church shopping—not all!—looking for a religious service provider who will meet all ones needs.

In distinction, the person of faith, the disciple has come to the end of themselves. They no longer look to their happiness as the end all and be all of life. In fact, the disciple knows that in order to find their lives they must lose their lives. They have been their own idol and now they release their idol so they can have relationship with the true and living God. Let's look at Exodus to see this.

The book of Exodus begins with God absent from his people and his people under hardship crying out to the God of their ancestors. Their God hears and responds, raising up a deliverer for his people. He gives them his name and frees them with his might and power. But, frees them for what? To go and live however they choose? No! If he did that they would just be back in Egypt (in whatever land they land in). They would still be slaves. Rather, they are free in order to serve and worship their God. So, the whole book wraps up with the completion of the Tabernacle, the covenant agreed to and obeyed, the glory of their God descending on the Tabernacle. God is with his people and they can now live as humanity was design to: serving and worshiping the creator and covenant making God.

What marks the fulfillment of the disciple is obedience to God which naturally culminates in the worship of God. This informs us as we dwell on the cross between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We have been set free by the Son, indeed! But, freed for what? To go on our merry way and live in whatever way pleases us? No! We would just return to the bondage of Sin and Death that we have just been freed from. Rather, we have been freed to be able to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. That is why the Spirit of God now dwells in us as the glory of the Lord resided on the Tabernacle. Our freedom is freedom from Sin which led to disobedience and it is freedom to obedience. This is what faith and discipleship looks like. Those who are merely religious must come to the end of themselves at the cross of Christ so they may live.

Prayer

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—One God, thank you that you have freed us from the bondage of Sin and Death. Help us to remember that you have set us free from these powers so we may enjoy relationship with you and live the life of the New Age which is your long awaited promise. Thank you for the indwelling of your Spirit which is the guarantee of our life with you in the age to come. Amen.