

CHAINS THAT BIND US

I witnessed a most comical sight early this morning. The old, spotted Pointer dog, which seemed a permanent fixture in the field of weeds across the road, had finally broken loose! Running here, there and everywhere in its new found freedom, I'm sure the dog would have been enjoying himself immensely had it not been for one most obvious complication – the chain. Still bound firmly to the collar around his neck, a long, heavy chain followed the dog wherever he trotted, becoming snagged on every rock and crack along the way. “Never mind”, the dog seemed to say, “I'll just run another way.” And off he would go, backtracking to untangle the chain and then taking an alternate route. I laughed at the silly dog, but at the same time, clearly saw the spiritual lesson in his antics. The dog had obviously found freedom, but was experiencing great difficulty in enjoying the benefits of such liberty because of having to drag the long chain with him wherever he ran.

We too have been set free. When we receive Yeshua as our Messiah and accept the sacrifice of His very own life in exchange for our own, our redemption price is paid in full. We are forgiven. The Son of God delivers us, severing those chains which had been binding us to the Kingdom of Darkness .

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”
(Colossians 1:13-14)

He set us free, not because we deserved to be ransomed from the pit, but out of God's great love for us and as a free gift. By grace we have been saved through faith and not our own good works.

While we were yet sinners, the Messiah died for us. “Therefore if the son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36) That's the good news! So if we're so free, then what is our problem? It seems to me that many of us...okay some of us...alright – I'll just speak for myself then – have the same problem as our friend, Mr. Spotty Pointer. We've broken loose from captivity, but the chains follow us and snag us up time after time after time.

Since I'm writing this at Passover, let's look at the Israelites; since we seem to delight in using them as a 'bad example' that heaven forbid we should ever follow! The Children of Israel toiled as slaves in Egypt for approximately four hundred years until God supernaturally delivered them with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. What was the final step to their salvation? Faith in the blood of the lamb. Although there seemed to be no logical explanation in the natural, each household was commanded to slay a lamb and to place its blood on the doorposts and lintels of their home. When the angel of death approached to kill the firstborn, if it saw the blood of the Lamb, it was not allowed to enter within the household to destroy. **“When I see the blood I will ‘pass over’ you.”** (Exodus 12:13) Whichever Israelite household obeyed the command and by faith applied the blood of the Lamb, that family was saved. That's the good news. So what was the problem? Although physically severed and saved from bondage in Egypt , the Israelites dragged their chains of captivity with them into the midbar (desert), causing them to fall into idolatry, unbelief, rebellion, and negativity. They failed to leave their 'slave mentality' behind in Egypt , but instead carried it with them into their new found freedom. It was this 'chain' to their past that tripped them up every time and eventually caused them all to perish. Out of the multitudes that God rescued from Egypt , only two men (Joshua and Calev) made it into the Promised Land by choosing to trust God. Their attitude remained, “With God's help we can

overcome. Kadima! (onward!)” The rest of the motley crew kept up a cowardly, self-pitying attitude that constantly whined, “We can’t do this. We’re probably going to die. Let’s go back to Egypt .”

This is serious stuff! I believe the Passover Seder ends too soon. It fails to give the admonition about what happened AFTER the Israelites’ deliverance. **“But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness...these things happened to them as examples and they were written for our admonition.”** (1 Corinthians 10:5, 11)

We also are saved by our faith in the blood of Yeshua, called the Lamb of God,[1] who was slain to pay the price for our sins, as prophesied by our Hebrew Prophets. [2] We have been set free – rescued, delivered, ransomed - that is an indisputable fact by the Word of God. Then why do we (sorry – I) not walk as if we’re free? It’s that chain from our captivity we drag around behind us for all to see. Non-believers can see the chain; let’s not fool ourselves. They hear us talk and see how we behave when we’re not abiding in our spiritually pious mode at prayer meetings or congregational services. After all, when we’re sitting, it’s easy to ignore the chain – just stuff it under the chair. But once we start to walk – that’s another story. When trials hit, when pressures build, when relationships trouble us, when supplies run out – what do we do with the chain then? What is our response? Do we have Joshua and Caleb’s overcoming attitude or do we whine and complain like the Israelites?

What, really, is the problem? The problem is that although we find spiritual freedom in Yeshua, we bring our slave/victim mentalities from our past into our present lives as Believers. This manifests as doubt, unbelief, negativity, whining, complaining, backbiting, gossiping, self-pity and a host of other ‘subtle sins’ that yet bind us. Therefore we have difficulty making any real progress or bearing the abundant fruit that the Father chose us to bear for His Kingdom’s sake. Perhaps we get a vision and start walking in one direction – but the chain yanks us back - snag! O.K., we try a different direction – snag! “Never mind, I guess I didn’t really hear from God, I’ll just backtrack and take an alternate route...” -snag!

What is the solution? Like our canine friend, we are also running a type of race but rather than being led by our noses, we are running to obtain the prize that is eternal life. (1 Cor.9:24) The apostle Paul (Shaul), who encountered serious difficulties in his life as a Believer and follower of Adoneinu Yeshua (our Lord Jesus) is well qualified to exhort us in how to run the race. **“...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Yeshua, the author and finisher of our faith...”** (Hebrews 12:1-2)

We must lay aside that heavy chain which is dragging us down, those sins which so easily snag us every time (and each of us probably knows exactly which those are for ourselves), that is making it difficult, if not impossible for us to run, let alone finish, the race set out before us. Let us not be like Fido, who runs aimlessly, hampered by the chain of his captivity he drags behind him. It was for freedom that the Messiah has set us free. Now that the chain has been severed, let’s remove the remaining shackles of captivity from around our neck and walk in perfect liberty. May we truly take hold of the Word of God, leave the past behind, including all it’s failures and victories, and look forward to the new thing God is bringing forth in our lives. If we hold on to the past, we will become its’ prisoner; we will become paralyzed in it, as was Lot ’s wife who looked back at Sodom and Gomorrah and was turned into a pillar of salt. Tears of regret over the past will hold us captive there in Egypt . God is doing a new thing! Halleluyah! Let’s walk into the wonderful future God has prepared for us as we enter into

this new year. **“Do not remember the former the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it?”** (Isaiah 43:18-19)

Dear Lord, I am reminded of an old song I used to sing, “Break through the chains in my life; tear down the strongholds and the walls. Deliver me from all bondage and strife; that I may hear when you call and give you my all, O Lord, my all, I’ll give you my all.” Yeshua we thank you for setting us free from the Kingdom of Darkness . We ask you now, as our mighty Deliverer to remove from us any remaining chains from our former captivity and teach us how to walk in freedom that you died to give us. Reveal to us the truth that will set us free – search us and know our heart. Try us and examine our thoughts. See if there remain any wicked ways in us and teach us to walk in the way of everlasting. We ask this in the name of Yeshua and because of Your awesome grace.

**“The Spirit of Adonai ^{יהוה} is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.”**
(Isaiah 61: 1)

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