

Weekly Word

July 14, 2008

By Mary Ruth Stone

Devotion

Forsaking Freedom

Spiritual freedom comes through faith in Jesus Christ. He came as the fulfillment of the Law that was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. He offered himself as the only perfect sacrifice capable of satisfying the requirements of the Law. No longer is it necessary to depend on one's own deeds to be reconciled with God. We are saved by faith in the works that Jesus did for us. His goodness, His righteousness is transmitted to us by His grace and through our faith.

I wonder at the relief early Jewish Christians must have felt when they were no longer required to keep such practices as circumcision and animal sacrifices. Faith in Jesus was and is liberating. However, Paul's letter to the Galatians indicates that some Jewish Christians returned to the practices required by the Law instead of continuing to believe that their faith in Christ would accomplish their salvation. Paul wondered why they would take such regressive action. He indicated that there were people attempting to influence them back to a "salvation by works" mentality.

Something similar happens today. There are people who live in fear rather than faith. They perform certain "good works" to ensure their salvation. Quite often they have a list of things that *must* be done in order to be saved. Usually they have an accompanying list of things that *must not* be done if one is to be saved. Often these lists are based on one's culture rather than the Word of God. People become slaves to their *do* and *don't do* lists. Their lives are miserable. Most often temptation to judge others by those same lists is part of the "salvation by works" mentality. How unfortunate to diminish the work of Jesus Christ in such a way!

Paul encouraged his readers with these words: "... knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ . . ." (Galatians 2:16).

What a gift of freedom—salvation through faith in Jesus Christ!

Scripture

"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ
(Galatians 1:6, 7).

This 'n That

"We need to remember that ever since the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Satan has been a defeated foe. His head has been crushed."

— Anne Graham Lotz

Prayer

Sweet Jesus,

Thank You for the freedom that is mine through Your life, death, and resurrection. Amen.

Saved by Him,
Mary Ruth