



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing



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Worship Music

Prayer

Lord, give me the attitude that turns every attack the devil sends into an opportunity for revival. Help me walk in such strong and consistent faith that I do not flinch at ANYTHING the devil tries to do to me. Rather than give in to my flesh and let worry conquer me, help me to remember the assignment You've given to me and to remain committed to finish my course on time. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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1 WHEN THE Lord your God brings you into the land which you are entering to possess and has plucked away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, **2** And when the Lord your God gives them over to you and you smite them, then you must utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them, or show mercy to them. **3** You shall not make marriages with them; your daughter you shall not give to his son nor shall you take his daughter for your son, **4** For they will turn away your sons from following Me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you and He will destroy you quickly. **5** But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and hew down their Asherim [symbols of the goddess Asherah] and burn their graven images with fire. **6** For you are a holy and set-apart people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a special people to Himself out of all the peoples on the face of the earth. **7** The Lord did not set His love upon you and choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the fewest of all people. **8** But because the Lord loves you and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. **9** Know, recognize, and understand therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, Who keeps covenant and steadfast love and mercy with those who love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations, **10** And repays those who hate Him to their face, by destroying them; He will not be slack to him who hates Him, but will requite him to his face. **11** You shall therefore keep and do the instruction, laws, and precepts which I command you this day. **12** And if you hearken to these precepts and keep and do them, the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love which He swore to your fathers. **13** And He will love you, bless you, and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your body and the fruit of your land, your grain, your new wine, and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the young of your flock in the land which He swore to your fathers to give you. **14** You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. **15** And the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and none of the evil diseases of Egypt which you knew will He put upon you, but will lay them upon all who hate you. **16** And you shall consume all the peoples whom the Lord your God will give over to you; your eye shall not pity them, neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you. **17** If you say in your [minds and] hearts, These nations are greater than we are; how can we dispossess them? **18** You shall not be afraid of them, but remember [earnestly] what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, **19** The great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out. So shall the Lord your God do to all the people of whom you are afraid. **20** Moreover, the Lord your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left and hide themselves from you are destroyed. **21** You shall not dread them, for the Lord your God is among you, a mighty and terrible God. **22** And the Lord your God will clear out those nations before you, little by little; you may not consume them quickly, lest the beasts of the field increase among you. **23** But the Lord your God will give them over to you and will confuse them with a mighty panic until they are destroyed. **24** And He will give their kings into your hand, and you shall make their name perish from under the heavens; there shall no man be able to stand before you, until you have destroyed them. **25** The graven images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. **26** Neither shall you bring an abomination (an idol) into your house, lest you become an accursed thing like it; but you shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.

Deuteronomy 7. Canaanites and Idols Must Be Destroyed

The Israelites were to destroy the Canaanites and all their idols. They should not make any agreements or covenants with them, nor should they intermarry with them. This sharp division was necessary in order to save Israel from idolatry and its abominations.

Behind these very strict commands stands God's love for Israel, stated in some of the most beautiful verses in Scripture (7:6–11). It was not because Israel was better or more important than other nations—it was that God had chosen Israel simply because He loved them. (Halley's Bible Handbook; Henry Halley; 2000; Zondervan; Bible History and Commentaries; page 177)

Chapter 7

Now in chapter seven,

When God brings you into the land and cast out these enemies that are bigger and stronger than you are; And he delivers them from before you; and smites them, and destroys them; you're not to make any covenant with them, nor show any mercy unto them: Neither shall you make any marriages with them. For they will turn away your son from following me, that they may serve other gods: and so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and you be destroyed suddenly. But you shall deal with them; and destroy their altars, break down their images, cut down their groves, burn their graven images in the fire. For thou art a holy [or a separated] people unto the LORD thy God: and the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the LORD did set his love upon you, did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than the people; for you were the fewest of all: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house when you were bondmen, in the hand of the Pharaoh in Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keeps covenants and mercy with those that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations (Deu 7:1-9);

Now earlier, we skipped over the law the second time through because we've gone through it in Exodus but in the law he said for—actually brings judgment upon the third and fourth generations to those that hate Him. But now here he declares that he shows mercy to a thousand generations to those that follow Him. So, how important that we follow the covenants of the Lord. Now in verse twelve. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if you will hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD shall keep unto thee the covenant of mercy which he swore to your fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee (Deu 7:12-13): So they are a special people. They are need to—they need to be aware of the special privileges even as you, today, are a

special people unto God; separate, holy, chosen. And God didn't choose you because you're so good-looking or because you were so loveable, but here is the sovereign grace of God in choosing. He chose you because He chose you, because He wanted to choose you and He has a right to choose whomever He wants. Oh, how I thank God for choosing me. What a thrill, what a blessing that God has chosen me.

Now some people get upset for the fact that God chooses but you really shouldn't. God has every right to choose who He wants to associate with even as you have the right to choose who you want to associate with. Why should I deny God the rights that I want for myself? There are some people I don't choose to associate with at all. Not that I'm snobbish or anything else but their lifestyles are so diverse from mine; there's nothing that we could share in common. I really choose not to have any fellowship, close fellowship, with people who smoke cigars. I can't stand the smell. Now I have that right to choose not to get in a car and be polluted. And God has a right to choose who he wants to associate with. That doesn't bother me at all. It thrills me to think that He chose me, that He chose to associate with me. That is what really excites me. You say, "But that isn't fair if God chooses not to associate with some people". I don't know if it's fair or not but that's the right that God has and He has exercised that right. And who are you to challenge the fairness of God? You say but, "He may not have chosen me". "Oh, how do you know?" "Well, I'm not a Christian." "Well, why aren't you a Christian?" "I don't know. I've never seen a need to be one." "Well, do you want to be a Christian?" "No." "Then maybe He didn't choose you. But don't blame Him. You haven't chosen Him either, have you?"

Now, let me assure you this. He has never rejected anyone either but He certainly leaves the choice up to you. And He says, "Choose you this day whom you will serve"(Joshua 24:15) and he said, "Whosoever comes unto me I will no wise cast out"(John 6:37). So if you don't know if He's chosen you or not, just accept Jesus Christ and you'll find He did. And then you won't argue with it anymore because He chose you, and after all why should you argue with that? You say, "But I don't want to accept him". Well then, that's your problem. He probably didn't choose you, and you're in bad shape.

But here God elected by His own sovereign will to choose these people not because they were so great, not because they were so faithful or anything else, just He exercised His power of choice. His love for their fathers, the faithfulness of Abraham, that He made the promise to Abraham that through him, through his seed would the Messiah come. "All the nations of the earth be blessed"(Genesis 18:18). And so they are actually reaping the benefits of the faith of their father Abraham.

Now the warning again to keep the commandments,

do them and so God will keep you and he will love you and bless you and multiply you: he'll bless the fruit of your womb, the fruit of the land, your corn, your wine, your oil, the increase of your cows and the flocks and your sheep, the land which he swore to give to your fathers. And you'll be blessed of all the people: and there shall not be a male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee (Deu 7:12-15).

Now, again this is the covenant that God is making. It's a conditional covenant; if you will obey, if you will do, if you will keep. Now it is interesting as you go back into the commandments of the Lord, much of what you read in Exodus and Leviticus is health codes. God tells them the kind of food they ought to eat. No junk food. Now it isn't really right for you to just put all kinds of junk into your body and then ask God to keep you strong and healthy. And so God gave to them laws that dealt with their diet, laws that dealt with sanitation and then he says, "Now, if you will keep these laws, if you will do them, obey them, then none of the diseases that came upon the Egyptians will come upon you". Why? Because you're following the good health practices that God has laid out. I think that it is wrong to deliberately dissipate our bodies and then ask God to keep us in good health. I think that he has given us good sense to use these promises and none of these diseases were conditional promises upon their doing and keeping, obeying, the commandment and the law of God.

Thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD shall deliver to you; you're not to have pity upon them: neither shall you serve their gods; for that will be a snare to you. If you shall say in your heart, The nations are more than we are; how can we dispossess them? Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but remember the LORD thy God did to Pharaoh, and all of Egypt; Moreover God will send the hornets in front of you to drive out the inhabitants. He'll not destroy them all at once, lest the wild beasts increase upon the field [and all] (Deu 7:16-18,20, 22). But little by little, He'll conquer the land.

The LORD will deliver to you, and destroy them with a mighty destruction [and so forth] (Deu 7:23)

Moses continues with the warnings. Now these are important because if they fail at this point to enter in, then who knows what would have happened. It's so important that they not become frightened and that they not lose faith and hesitate again. It's important that they go in and conquer the land. So Moses is doing all that he can to build him and bolster their faith and their confidence in God.

(Through The Bible; C 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986)

No one in the world is truly as free as a believer in Jesus Christ. As Paul said in Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Freedom means a state of free moral agency - the capacity to make real choices in life. While believers are truly free, it is wrong to use that term to describe a sinner. The sinner has only one true choice - whether to put his or her faith in Jesus. He is in such bondage to his flesh that he cannot stop what he is doing.

Many people today do evil things without knowing why they do them. They say, "I hate it; I don't want to do it; I don't understand why I do it. I hate myself for doing it, but I do it anyway." They are bound and held by a power - the power of Satan.

Before we came to Christ, all of us were children of wrath and our whole manner of life was spent trying to fulfill the desires of the flesh and mind (see Ephesians 2:3). Our only option was which manner of bondage we would choose. We weren't free moral agents because we had no capacity to turn from sin. We might exchange one form of ungodliness for another, but we were incapable of living righteously. There is no freedom to be found in such a dreadful condition.

To remain free, we must not exercise our liberty in any area that will bring us back under bondage.

What a contrast to the glorious liberty we have been given in Christ Jesus! As recipients of God's love and forgiveness, we have been granted freedom from the domination of our flesh. We no longer have to live as slaves to our own fleshly desires. We have been granted the capacity to turn from sin to serve and worship God. We have been set free from the chains of darkness that held us in bondage. Through our believing and trusting in Jesus Christ, we are free from having to live according to a standard of the law in order to be accepted by God. As children of God, we have a taste of liberty and freedom like nothing we have ever known.

We are free in Christ, and the extent of our liberty is so vast that Paul could say, "All things are lawful for me" (I Corinthians 10:23). There is no broader ethic contained in any philosophy in the world. In fact, the man who can say, "All things are lawful for me" is the freest man who ever lived.

But Paul also insisted that while all things are lawful for us, "all things are not expedient" (verse 23). That is, although there are areas of freedom we could pursue that wouldn't put our salvation in jeopardy, they would impede our progress in our walk with God. We are to avoid areas that would distract us from a simple, wholehearted devotion to God. If we are to remain free, we must be careful not to exercise our liberty in any area that will bring us back under bondage.

Freedom Badly Used

So many times people misunderstand Christian liberty, thinking that freedom in Christ means they can freely commit all kinds of sin. They use their freedom as an occasion for the flesh. This is a total perversion of what Scripture teaches about Christian liberty. Our liberty is never a freedom to sin freely; it is never a license to sin.

The glorious liberty we have been called to in Christ Jesus is first of all a freedom from our flesh and the domination that our flesh once held over us. In Romans 6, Paul tells us this freedom in Christ is a freedom to serve and worship God. We are free not to live the sinful, sensual kind of life that we once lived.

In Eden, Adam was granted tremendous freedom. He could eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God knew from the beginning that Adam would disobey His command, eat from the forbidden tree, and thus bring sin and misery into the world. Even so, God did not physically prevent Adam from eating the fruit. Adam misused his freedom and we suffer the catastrophic consequences of his choice today. Sin came into the world through one man's wrong exercise of freedom.

In like manner, we can choose to make wrong use of our freedom in Christ. It is possible for us to take this glorious freedom and exercise it in such a way that we are brought back into bondage. We have all heard people say things like, "Well, as a Christian I am free. Thus I intend to gratify this impulse of my flesh because I have freedom to do so." We must remember that we also have freedom not to do so. We should never use our freedom as an occasion for our flesh - to yield to its impulses. Hebrews 12:1,2 tells us to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us," and to "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

Freedom to Serve

It's clear how we should not use our freedom in Christ. The real question is, How should we use it? How can we use our freedom in a way that honors God and helps us to grow in grace? Paul had the answer in Galatians 5:13. He said we should use our freedom to serve one another in love: "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Scripture constantly reminds us of the high value God places on humble servitude.

Over and over, the Bible reminds us that if we want to be really great in God's kingdom, we must serve. Jesus made a magnificent statement to His disciples at the beginning of what we call the Great Commission. He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Can you imagine how much power that must be? All the power of the universe was given to Him. The same power that lit the fires of the stars and holds every atom together belongs to Jesus.

And what did He do with this power? Shake the universe? Spin out a few new galaxies? No. Jesus took off His robe, girded Himself about as a servant, and washed His disciples' feet. After He had washed the last dirty ankles and toes, He asked His men, in effect, "Do you know what I have done? I have given you an example. For if I, being your Lord, have served you, then so also ought you to serve one another" (see John 13:12-14).

What if right now you could say, 'All power in the universe is mine'? What would you do with such power? Jesus took a towel and a basin of water and washed the filthy feet of His disciples. All power in the universe was His - and what did He do with it? He washed the disciples' feet.

There are very few of us who want to serve. Instead, we love to give orders and be waited on. "Go get me that!" "Hand that tool to me." "I need you to go." How we love to give orders, and how we get upset when the orders aren't fulfilled! We get hurt, we pout. We enjoy being part of the ruling class... but God's greatest blessings are not to be found there. We have been set free not to boss others around, but to serve one another in love.

Without question, this blessing requires a work of God's Spirit within our hearts. My flesh certainly rebels at the idea of serving someone else in love. Often my immediate reaction to even the simplest request is, "If you want a glass of water, go get it yourself. Who was your slave yesterday?" My flesh loves to be catered to. It clamors to be served. But I have been set free from bondage to my flesh and now I can serve others in love. What a joy it is to serve in love! All of the law is encapsulated in one phrase: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39).

Freedom to Love

Two hundred years before Jesus, Buddha said, "Don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you." Notice he put it in the negative. If you don't want someone to bust you in the nose, then don't bust him in the nose. It is a negative injunction.

The golden rule isn't merely avoiding wrong; it's actively seeking out practical ways to express love.

There are a lot of people around today who mistake Buddha's advice for the golden rule. They believe they are righteous because of what they don't do. "Well," they may say, "I don't hurt anybody. I've never killed anyone and I don't sleep around." Their lives become so predicated on negatives that they literally become "good for nothing."

But observe that Jesus framed this ethic in distinctly positive terms. He said, 'As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise' (Luke 6:31). Even as I would like to be served, I should serve. Even as I would like to be loved, I should love. Even as I would like to receive gifts, I should give.

Loving our neighbors as ourselves means taking the initiative to do for others in a creative, active, and joyful manner. The golden rule isn't merely about avoiding wrong, but rather, it's about actively seeking out practical ways to express our love.

Jesus says we fulfill the law first by loving God then by loving others and treating them as we would like to be treated. We like others to speak well of us, so we should speak well of them. We like others to overlook our faults, so we should extend the same gracious attitude toward them.

Churchgoing Cannibalism

Why is it that when someone says something unkind about us, often our first response is to take them down a few pegs? We drop a few remarks to the effect that our critics aren't quite as holy as they'd like others to think. "Well, I only like to speak the truth, and I want to tell you about him," we say. Then when they hear what we have been saying, another round is triggered in an endless cycle of backbiting and ill will.

On the other hand, if I find out someone really likes me and is saying nice things about me, I say, "Well, he is surely an excellent judge of character. He is just a marvelous person, you know."

It used to be that when someone was intent on tearing another person to pieces, I would bait him on. After he had dumped his load of garbage I would say, "Well, that is very interesting. I guess you didn't know he was my uncle, did you?" I liked to watch the reaction.

Paul warned us, "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Galatians 5:15). If we find ourselves in the practice of biting and devouring one another - speaking cutting, destructive, even sarcastic words about one another - we are walking in the antithesis of love. Sadly, a kind of interpersonal, relational cannibalism begins to take place. We find ourselves trapped in a destructive, vicious circle. Jealousy and bitterness and striving develop and soon the church is eating itself up. We are being consumed one of another.

I once read an account of a man in England who successfully bred a particularly vicious breed of game cocks. His roosters were almost invincible in the pit, and the man took great pride in the stature and reputation he had gained as a result of his efforts. Each morning he would walk out and admire his fighting birds. One day he went out to inspect his roosters and, much to his horror, found their pen littered with feathers, blood, and carcasses. His precious stock was lying about, ripped to shreds. He quickly called one of his hired hands and asked what had happened. "Who was so stupid as to put these aggressive creatures in the same pen?" he thundered. The servant replied meekly, "I did, sir." "And why would you do such a stupid thing?" demanded the owner. "Well," said the employee,

"I figured by now they would all know they are fighting on the same side." But of course, the birds were too stupid to recognize the real enemy.

Unfortunately, there are times when we in the church hardly perform on a more intelligent level. We often forget who our real enemy is. The enemy is not a group of Baptists or Presbyterians. Our real enemy is the power of darkness that holds men in slavery to deception and sin. We need to quit our self-destructive rivalries and begin working together for the common good of God's kingdom. For if we bite and devour one another, we are going to be consumed by one another. One day we are going to find the church bloody and broken and the world will say, "Look - that's Christianity for you!"

How tragic that so much of the history of the church has been spent in devouring and consuming one another. We are far too given to unfairly labeling and putting down those in other fellowships, and nothing could be more counterproductive to the progress of the kingdom of God.

As free men and women in Christ, we need to walk in the Spirit - the Spirit of love, forgiveness, and kindness. We must look to the Lord for His grace and empowerment. This is not an elective for us. Where else will we find the strength to run against this destructive tide and focus on what is good and praiseworthy in others, even those with whom we disagree?

The Responsibility of Freedom

With freedom comes great responsibility. Always. The price of freedom is eternal vigilance, someone once said. We must be on guard to maintain our freedom because it is terribly easy to lose.

Do not be misled into misusing your freedom to gratify your flesh. Yes, we are free in Christ to act as we choose. And yes, while God may not condemn your soul to hell over some questionable activity, ask yourself: Does it slow you down? Is it impeding your progress toward the goal?

The main goal and desire of my life is to be found in Christ, complete in Him. Paul said, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (I Corinthians 9:24). I intend to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). "Wherefore... let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1,2).

I don't want anything to slow me down. I don't want anything to impede my progress. Someone Might tell me, "But Chuck, there is nothing wrong with X. A Christian can do that." Sure he can. But it can also impede his progress toward the goal! 'All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient' (I Corinthians 6:12). Some lawful things tear me down and harm my relationship with Jesus. 'All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any' (verse 12). If I am to remain free, I must be careful not to exercise my freedom in pursuing anything that could bring me under its power. Once I have succumbed to its power, I am no longer free. If I want to exercise my freedom in activities that get a grip on me and will not let me go, then I am no longer free. I have been foolish in the exercise of my freedom and have brought myself back into bondage. And that's no way to live.

Thank God, we have been given freedom in Christ! Thank God, we have been given the resources to maintain that freedom! Mere words cannot express what it means to be truly free.

May the Lord help us to freely love, to freely serve, to freely seek the best interests of one another. For then, at last, we shall be capable of fully enjoying the incomparable delights to be found only in the freedom of God's great grace.

("Why Grace Changes Everything"; Chuck Smith; Chapter 9: "Free Indeed")