Series: Four Cups

 Based on the book by Chris Hodges.

February 11, 2018

Message Two:

**Freedom … beyond Forgiveness**

Exodus 6:6-7

***Two cups of juice on a table.***

**Intro:** Some of you may remember this:

***Braveheart movie clip***

The fact is, the movie is not the facts. Much about the movie is simply Hollywood - but it is true that there was a guy named William Wallace - and it was true that the people of Scotland wanted to be free from the British -

The idea is - the British thought the people of Scotland were free by being led and ruled by the British - but the people of Scotland didn’t think they were free - they didn’t feel free. They wanted true freedom.

**Sometimes we think we’re free - but there is more freedom to be had!**

We are talking about 4 purposes that God has for our lives based on the four cups that are received in the Jewish Passover celebration.

The Passover is the most significant celebration of the Jewish people - and since Jesus came as an extension and fulfillment of all the Jewish promises of the Old Testament, it is highly significant for us as well - and there are four promises and purposes symbolized by these four cups that are extremely important for us as well.

In fact, Jesus was celebrating the Passover meal with His followers just before His crucifixion when He took one of these cups and said that God was making a New Covenant -

Luke 22:20 - After supper he took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.”

Covenants are more than promises - they are commitments of life.

* God has committed to helping you to know Him.
* God has committed to set you free from whatever holds you back.
* God has committed to help you discover His purpose for your life.
* God has committed to empowering you to make a difference in the world.

Exodus 6:6-7 - Therefore, say to the people of Israel: ‘I am the Lord. I will free you from your oppression and will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment. I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt.

* I will free you from your oppression.
* I will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt.
* I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment.
* I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God.

These four statements are memorialized by four cups of wine that are part of the Passover celebration.

When we have surrendered our lives to Jesus, we have been brought into the family of God and these commitments become ours - and these become our purposes - this is what we are teaching in this series.

Last week, we talked about **the first cup - The Cup of Sanctification** -

To be sanctified means to be cleaned up and set apart for God’s purpose.

We drink the cup of Sanctification by accepting Jesus as God’s Son and Savior of our sins …through His crucifixion … We recognize we are sinners, we recognize we have lived a disobedient, destructive life, and we accept that Jesus’ work on the cross brings us forgiveness and freedom from those sins.

Then - we purpose to take this message to everyone else -

Matthew 28:19-20 - Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Exodus 6:6 - …I will free you from your oppression…

This is what God does for all who believe - He sets us free from the oppression of the sinful lifestyle.

**The second cup** we focus on today is called t**he Cup of Deliverance** -

Exodus 6:6- I will … rescue you from your slavery.

God promised not only to bring them out of Egypt, but to set them free from a slavery mindset.

His promise to us is that we are set free when we receive the truth. And once we receive that freedom, we share the truth with others.

John 8:32 - And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Try to imagine something that’s hard to do - try to imagine that you have been a slave - that’s all you’ve known all your life - your entire family have been slaves - everyone you know among your people have been slaves - and it has been this was for 400 years.

The founding of the Jamestown Colony was 410 years ago …

This is all you and your people have ever known!

All of a sudden - you’re free - and you start a new life!

What do you do? How do you do it? Everything you’ve ever known was slavery - what little you had was provided for you - every aspect of your life was predetermined - you never had any freedom -

They didn’t know how to make any choices on their own - so they failed - their failure kept them from receiving what God wanted them to receive - their failure led them to live a life in a desert for a generation - 40 years -

It’s similar to people who live years in prison - when they get out, they’re not sure how to live - some commit another crime just so they can go back to the regimentation of life in the prison - they don’t know how to live in freedom.

This can be true in our spiritual lives as well - but here's the promise of the Cup of Deliverance -

Exodus 6:6- I will … rescue you from your slavery.

Does it seem redundant that He says He will free them from their oppression in Egypt, then He says that He will rescue them from the slavery? Isn’t being freed from Egypt the same as being rescued from slavery?

Not necessarily!

“You can take the boy out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of the boy!”

You can take the people of out Egypt, but it’s harder to take the Egypt out of the people.

God can forgive people for their sin, but it’s another thing for us to live in freedom from that sin and not keep going back to it.

Jesus doesn’t just want to forgive us - and forgive those we know - He wants to rescue us from the slavery of returning to sin.

The people of Israel were out of Egypt, but they had a wrong view of themselves, a distrustful view of God, and they didn’t fully realize the future God had planned for them.

Sometimes we have messed up thinking - We are forgiven, but we are still stuck in selfish habits, secret addictions, and sinful attitudes.

We need this Cup of Deliverance. If we are going to experience the future God has for us, we must be set free from an old mindset that keeps us stuck in the past.

Some people hear the word Deliverance and they think of a horrible movie by the same name - or maybe The Exorcist -

But for us deliverance means to be set free from the entrapments of the past that can keep us from God’s full plan for our lives.

Some think this happens when we accept Jesus - sometimes, but not always.

When we confess our sins and put our faith in Jesus, we are forgiven of our sins, and we have assurance of eternal life in heaven - but often, even after forgiveness, people remain stuck in habits and attitudes that have to change if we are going to experience the full life God has planned for us - like a slave or a prisoner who doesn’t know how to live once set free - after we are forgiven, we have to learn how to live!

How do we get past the thoughts of the past? How do we get past the desires and habits of the past? How do we get free of the results of what our life before Christ did to us?

Romans 7:21-24 - I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God’s law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?

It’s frustrating when we know that God has given us such forgiveness of our past, yet we still seem entrapped by it!

**You can’t win this battle alone!**

The Christian family is exactly that - a family - We are a community - and community means we live in common unity.

I have begun to try to avoid the word congregation and instead use the words church family - a congregation is just a gathering people - we want to be more than that - we want to be a family! We need each other!

We really do need each other!

John 13:35 - Your love for *one* *another* will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

Ephesians 5:21 - And further, submit to *one* *another* out of reverence for Christ.

Hebrews 10:24 - Let us think of ways to motivate *one* *another* to acts of love and good works.

1st John 3:11 - This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love *one* *another*.

Ephesians 4:32 - Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving *one* *another*, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Philippians 2:2 - Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving *one* *another*, and working together with *one* mind and purpose.

2nd John 1:5 - I am writing to remind you, dear friends, that we should love *one* *another*.

Hebrews 10:25 - And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage *one* *another*, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

1st Peter 4:10 - God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve *one* *another*.

1st John 3:23 - And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love *one* *another*, just as he commanded us.

1st John 4:7 - Dear friends, let us continue to love *one* *another*, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.

2nd John 1:6 - Love means doing what God has commanded us, and he has commanded us to love *one* *another*, just as you heard from the beginning.

I could go on! Do you think the Biblical plan is for us to rely on one another!

We are not meant to live this life alone! We need each other!

So - being together - living together - doing life together - loving each other - holding one another accountable - supporting one another - listening to one another - confessing to one another - praying for one another -

This is God’s plan for us to live in freedom beyond forgiveness.

Some people struggle with great addictions - drugs - nicotine - alcohol - sex - pornography -

Others - don’t seem to be so “big ticket” - yet we still need to be free from jealousy - anger - greed - hypocrisy - dishonesty - criticism - too much time on social media - television - appearance - sports - workaholic -

Part of an addiction’s power is that when you try to quit, you fail. When you try to get better you don’t -

Just when you think you’ve got it licked - you fall again!

We need each other. We need to walk together.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 - Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.

This is the heart behind our small groups. This is why small groups are so important - they are relational … we need life-giving relationships …

This was my first priority when I came here … it transformed our church …

Being in relationships with other believers who struggle - it will strengthen you and it will strengthen them. We don’t accept our struggles - we walk with one another through our struggles!

If you think you can do it alone - get through it alone - live victorious over past habits and thought patterns alone - you are believing a lie.

Are you holding on to hurts from the past?

Are you refusing to forgive someone? … who does that hurt?

What did Jesus say? … Lord's Prayer … teaching after …

We do this together. Get in a group - get in a relationship - share this with someone.

You will get more long-lasting results from a small group than you will from counseling sessions. You need people you are in relationship with to walk together with you - often in these groups you will find ministry and focusing on ministry will keep you from focusing on your past. More on that in a future cup.

God gives us a promise through Jesus Christ to make us overcomers!

Romans 8:37 - No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

Great victories don’t come easy - they are hard-fought -

Jesus work on the cross was not easy …

James 5:16 - Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

Explain …

Not easy - but necessary - we’re in this thing together -

In order to drink from the Cup of Deliverance we need at least one other follower of Christ involved - someone who loves God and loves you.

If I'm going to be successful at exercising or eating healthier - I need someone to do it with.

If I’m going to live above the culture of my past - I need someone to do it with.

Drinking from the Cup of Deliverance means inviting Jesus to be Lord over every area of our lives -

Some probably didn’t think about this when you asked for forgiveness …

Every area … if He's not Lord of all, He’s not Lord at all …

How do we do this? We do it every day.

Give us “this day” our daily bread … not to worry about tomorrow …

Come Kingdom of God, be done will of God, in my life - TODAY. Spend some time in His word - every day - After a while, it will get in you.

After a while, those Scriptures will come to mind when you need them …

Hebrews 8:10 - But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

You can’t get to the third or fourth cup unless you drink this one. You can’t be a person of influence until you have a level of freedom over the entrapments of the past.

You can take the boy out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of the boy - the sinful country needs to get out of us so that we can have an influence in bringing others into these promises God has for us.

This is for you -

This is the second purpose for our church family -

Exodus 6:6 - I will free you from your oppression and will rescue you from your slavery