

Freedom in Christ

by Chris Famisaran

Welcome to this presentation from the Downey Seventh Day Adventist Church. We are located in the greater Los Angeles area at 9820 Lakewood Boulevard in Downey, California. We would love to have your worship with us any Saturday you are in our area.

Good morning, everybody. Oh, this mic is not cooperating. Can you see? family who are always able to quickly help out when I'm in need. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for the opportunity to once again come together today to study and above all, worship you to be with us now as we turn to the Scriptures as we talk about freedom. And also Lord, partake in the emblems. Be with us in Jesus name, amen.

My goodness, every week keeps getting better and better because I see more people. I don't know how many are here today. But it's probably close to say we may be one of our bigger Sabbaths since we've come back. It's great to see you all, thank you,

I believe was in 2018, there was a woman who had to go and have a procedure done to take out a tumor. Now, this is a pretty common occurrence in today's age. Correct? relatively quick. I've never had the procedure done on me. But I know that it happens on a regular basis. However, this was not just any normal tumor. It was a tumor that weighed over 132 pounds. Can you imagine trying to carry 132 pound tumor? That's literally a full grown adult. Amen. And I don't know exactly where the tumor was. But carrying a tumor around. That would be very hard. Right. So I don't know the full story, but I imagine she was at some point, bedridden. Now, the tumor, from what I understand was growing at about 10 pounds per week. So 40 pounds in one month. That's literally a child right there in your stomach. And then a couple of months later 132 pounds, can you imagine the pressure on the insides. Can't go anywhere. You're not able to work, you're not able to sustain your livelihood. Thoughts are well what am I going to do? Is this tumor gonna outgrow me might literally and so they had to have emergency surgery. Now there was a team of surgeons, let's just take a guess anybody want to know how many surgeons it took to remove this tumor? Take a guess. 10, 20 not quite. 5. 12. 12 surgeons for a five hour procedure. Have mercy. Now they were able to extract the tumor and fortunately enough, the tumor was benign. Okay, the opposite is malignant, right? That's the bad one. But even still 132 pound tumor is no joke. And so finally, ah, she could breathe her insides weren't, you know, feeling pushed in and, and pressured. She could breathe normally, she could finally actually eat again. And so she had the tumor removed. And when she went to go and do her post her follow up with her, her doctor, she came in with a smile with joy, whereas before it was just pain and anguish. Having this tumor was a burden to her. And finally as she walked into the office, she finally felt free she had her life back again. Man 132 pounds tumor. I don't weigh Well, I weigh more than 132 pounds but having one of me. No, not not not down for

that. But this poor woman had been burdened for a long time. I don't even know maybe she was sick before. But her experience of having this tumor wrecked her life. Some respects even not gonna lie, the last year and a half has been a challenge and at times it has been a burdened. My question to you today is right now are you feeling burdened? feeling tired? Are you feeling stressed out? So, are you feeling burdened? You know, it's God's desire. It is God's desire to set us free from any burdens, guilt, or shame.

In fact, let's go to the scriptures. Okay, so let's go to Galatians 5, if you got your Bibles, pull them out, there may be a Bible in front of you. Or if you have no Bibles around you pull out your tablet or your phone. Let's go to Galatians 5, verse one, Galatians 5, verse 1, if you're joining us for the first time, or maybe if you're used to just having the scriptures thrown up there, we decided to take a different route. And we want people to literally bring their Bibles and open the Word of God, as well. Okay. So we want to make sure that you have an opportunity, at least once a week to do so. Alright, I still hear some pages turning. Alright, are we all there? Okay. And so Paul, he's writing to the church in Galatia, he says it is for what freedom that Christ has what? So stand what stand firm, then and do not yourselves be burdened, again, by what? A yoke of slavery, anybody not know what a yoke is. Alright, just in case. So, back in the day, you would have, let's just say two cows or two bulls, and the yoke is what you would place on top of their necks to help control them so that one wouldn't try to get in front of each other. And data will also be harnessed to the plow, so they would work together. And, you know, maybe there's a farmer who's got a really strong, rocky, rocky field. And he's got these cows have to really work and sometimes that yoke can be heavy, a heavy burden on their shoulders. At some point, have you felt that burden that stress that angst that that, frankly, sometimes you question your belief on your shoulders, this last week, last month, maybe the last couple of years. And God doesn't want us to live with this burden, or the guilt or the shame, God desires that we be set free. Some of us are wondering, Well, how do I do that? So I'd like to share with you a couple of thoughts, three things that are important. And not only living a life but living a life well, and being able to live freely.

So the first one is intentionally, intentionally place, Christ in your life. Something that is important, you're going to find a way to make it important. Alright, you have to prioritize and, you know, look, God works through us know the Holy Spirit's work in your life. But we also sometimes it's not just about faith, but we also have to be intentional. So intentionally place Christ in your life.

Well, how do I do that? Well, first off, trusting God, trust God in everything about your life. And placing God first is what I'm doing. The decisions that I'm making, or working towards, am I honoring God, with my family, with my friends, in my workspace, at the grocery store, the park, my neighborhood, and my being a faithful servant of faithful disciple for God. And as we move towards discipleship, we have to know who God is in order to be faithful disciples. So we have to pray. Is prayer an important part of your life? You know, sometimes even this last week, somebody asked me, Pastor, how can I pray? And maybe you know what, let's even do this. You

know, last when I first came here, I gave you a method of prayer, and it's called the ACTS prayer. adoration. Anybody else? Does anybody remember what C is? confession? What's t? [Thanksgiving]

All right? And what's s? [supplication] How would you reword that? Because some people have no idea what supplication is, your requests to God. Right? So let's just give an example. Let's you want to pray real quick. Some of you are wondering how can we pray? Let's do the ACTS prayer. God, we adore you. We thank you for all that you're doing in our life, that you are our God. You are our rock and our Savior and you are a redeemer. God we confess our sins, Lord, we've maybe said something or, or done something to harm somebody else, Lord, forgive us. But thank you for the amount of the wonderful blessing you've placed in our life that you have done and you will do in the future Lord, and Lord, it is our prayer that as Downey church, we be a faithful people to you, lead and guide us, Lord, we have family and friends in the midst here who are dealing with, with sickness with financial challenges. Lord, where perhaps may be at odds with someone, we place these requests these supplications to you, in Jesus name, amen. All right, pretty simple, right? Is that something you could do every day? Maybe even start your day and end with prayer. So make prayer, be intentional. Maybe, hey, maybe you have to put in your schedule a reminder in your phone, hey, let's pray at seven o'clock in the morning or 2pm or 4:35, or, or 7:35, whatever, be intentional. But you also have to be intentional about not only praying, but also spending time in the Word because what better way to learn who God is than through Scripture. So spend time in the Word. These two things alone spending time in prayer and spending time in the Bible. Especially as you read, you will discover who a God is our God is in the Bible, not just any God, but a God of love of grace. And that desires to help and lead you in everything to find freedom for you. And not just leading because being a disciple, it's not it's not an individual thing. We're also called to serve others. So we practice our faith.

Finding freedom also means practicing our faith and, and as you practice, you're gonna find and discover that man, life is so much greater when I'm helping others. Maybe you can volunteer somewhere, or maybe you have you've been blessed. So share your blessings with others. Speaking of which, we're gonna be talking more about that the rest of this month. So please, if you've not signed up for your small group, make sure some of us will, again, we'll be doing either online or in person or maybe a mixture of both. But take the opportunity to be able to one point be a blessing to somebody. Even something as simple as saying hello and smiling at somebody can make a big difference in somebody's life.

The second thing is to remember your blessings. How much is how much easier is it to remember the negative than the positive? So much easier. Right? In fact, you look around like on TV, how much of it is positive? Very small. Have you ever watched a positive news hour on KTLA? Frankly, I feel more depressed after I watch the news. Now, to be fair, like, Look, we need to know what's happening, right? But yet, good grief, I don't feel uplifted after watching the news. It's more of like, Man, what do I need to do to prepare myself to watch the news? So much so that sometimes it's just easier to not just want to you don't want to know you don't

care anymore. But then you're not aware. And so one of the things that we have to do is we have to remember our blessings and think about that, like number one. We're all breathing, right? I know for a fact for some of us here in this room, there have been obstacles in your life where you were not sure you were even going to be around today. Amen. And, I think number one, that's a that's a blessing. I am so blessed to be able to, to be surrounded in the community and almost Yeah, I know we're not like where we were pre COVID but Good grief. The church is filling up. Amen. I'm so excited.

But if you have food on the table, that's a blessing. If you have gas in your car, that's a blessing. If you have somebody to call and say hello to, that's a blessing. So find the good in everything that you can.

And finally, the last thing which we're here all here for is there's strength in community, your friends, your family, your fellow believers, it is so good and be intentional about reaching out to your family, your friends, your fellow church members, because God doesn't call us to walk this journey alone, to be in communion, to be in community with others.

You know, when I look through the Scriptures, when I look at the Gospels, I think of people who found freedom, for instance, the woman at the well, the Samaritan woman, John 4 she found who the Messiah was not only that, she just find out, but she went back home, she told everybody in her village, they also wanted to meet the Messiah. And they affirmed and said, Yes, we know who God is now, because of you. One of the first evangelists was a Samaritan woman. And if you truly understand what that really means, you're scratching your head right now, how is that possible? But thanks to God, it is. I also think of the the the several people that Jesus restored their sight. Can you imagine not being able to easily just get up and go somewhere? No. When I when I served as a camp counselor, many years ago, we would have, we would dedicate one or two weeks for those who were visually challenged, and we would have to help them. But by and large, they were actually pretty, very self sufficient. I was amazed how they adapted their life. Wasn't easy. But also, I was impressed and motivated to see how they could overcome obstacles that they faced. Yet, when I looked through the Scriptures, I also see now, at that time, there was no hope for them. And God restored the sign. In fact, you also think of the lepers, you think of the woman who had been bleeding, so many miracles that Jesus was able to bring freedom and hope to people who their outlook in life was not great. It's God's desire, that we find freedom that we find hope, and ultimately extends the gift of salvation. Amen. So strengthen community.

So just real quick recap. Intentionally place Christ in your life. Remember your blessings. Remember that there's strength and community, and that God God desires to bring us freedom to set us free. Now, today, we're also as an act of solidarity and community. We're going to we're going to partake in the emblems of communion. So just so as we get started, just before we go into communion, does everybody have have their juice? wafer? Okay. deacons, can we Okay, they're gonna go and get you your juice and your your wafer, and I know what brought him out, but where did it go? Okay. So, on this table here, we have the bread, you know, in

Second Corinthians 12, nine through 10. It says as it is written, they freely scattered their gifts to the poor, their righteousness endures forever. Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for the food will also supply an increase your store of seed and enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. God talks Jesus Himself talks about bread. In fact, he says I am the bread of what life Why is bread so important? Food, right, in order to be able to move, you got to have energy much like a car. Car can't go anywhere without gas or diesel right. And so food.

This represents food. represents life. You also to break the bread open, to be able to eat it. And breaking the bread also represents Jesus, his body broken, beaten, and dying on the cross. We also have the juice which the blood representative Christ's blood shed. But blood is not just blood. Why is blood so important? It's life. Let's go a little bit more granular. What does the blood do? What does it carry? Oxygen, right? Can you live without oxygen? No. So the blood pushes the oxygen to your brain to your toes. And it helps you to be able to live literally.

Now, I'm going to read something here. It's our fundamental belief. We're going to be partaking in the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a petition in the participation in the emblems of the body and of the blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Savior. And in this experience of communion, Christ is present to meet and strengthen his people. As we partake we joyfully proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again. And so as we partake in this supper, think about Christ in your life. Where has Christ brought you? The master ordained the service of footwashing, as well to signify cleansing or renew, cleansing to rest, a willingness to serve others in a Christ like humility, to unite our hearts and love. Now, today, we're not able to do footwashing Okay, hopefully by the next quarter, we'll be able to do so. But just to kind of touch on that footwashing is a humble endeavor, right? And it's intentional, because God has called us in humility and love to serve one another. So don't forget that as well. This communion service is open to everybody, as an Adventist Church, we participate in open communion. Now here, you'll have your juice, and on the top, though, that will be the waffer or the bread, okay? It is unleavened bread, I made sure. And so before we ordered these.

But in in the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew 26, on the first day of the festival of the unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover? He replied, go into the city to a certain man and tell him, the teacher says, My appointed time is near, I'm going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house. So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and prepared the Passover. And when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the 12. And while they were eating, he said, Truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me. And their response was, everybody was sad. And they began to say, to surely Lord who's going to be the one who does that? Jesus replied, the one who has dipped his hand into the bowl will be training, the Son of Man will go just as it was written about him, but well to the man who betrays the Son of Man. Now, let's moving forward in verse 26, while they were eating, Jesus took the bread. And when he'd given thanks, he broke it. And he gave it to his disciples and He said, Take and eat, this is my body. So he broke it. And he said, Take this, eat, this is my body, don't eat anything yet, hold on. And he

took the cup. And giving thanks, he gave it to them saying, drink it from all of you. This is my blood, the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now until that day, when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom. So Jesus is looking forward to as well. When we're all together, we'll be able to partake in communion. Again, Jesus says, I'm the bread of life.

And you know, he's also in John 6. He's also referring back to when way back the Israelites what a God provide them with when they had run out of food, the manna right. And here, Jesus is literally comparing himself to a piece of bread, saying Because of the bread, now I break my body. And I'm going to shed my blood yet. I only do it because I love you.

As Bill and Edwin, would you mind coming up here, we're going to pray for these emblems. Now, and especially as well, there's nothing mystical about the juice or the bread. They're symbols. We're going to pray. And afterwards I will read a passage and there will take part in the communion. So gentlemen, at this time, let us prepare our hearts and in prayer, let's go ahead and begin.

Yes, pray. Dear heavenly Father. In this hour, we remember that our salvation has a price. In You gave your Holy Son, to pay our debt. Thank you, Father, because through him, we have salvation. In for you grace and your love. We believe one day will be with you in the heaven. Thank you, Father, because we remember this bread, symbol of the body of Jesus who was crushed. and crucified in the quest for our salvation. We give you glory and honor. Thank you, Father, in Jesus name. Amen.

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for your precious blood that was spilled for us. It was blood that was innocent. And it was blood that didn't deserve to die. And especially in a treatment like that. Lord, there's no way we can repay that debt. But we are grateful for what you did for us to give us hope, and a future. Lord thank you so much for this juice that represents your blood that was spilled for us. Help us to remember what you did, and that we might be as grateful and as gracious to others as you have been to us. Be with us now. In Jesus name. Amen.

Thank you, gentlemen.

In a letter written to the believers in Corinth, Paul has to correct an abuse that had been going on where some of the more privileged and those who had more means had turned the communion into something that it was not. And so he had to write them a letter, and basically said, Hey, no, this is what it really what it really means. And so in verse 23, it says, For I received from the Lord, what I also pass on to you. Okay, the Lord Jesus. On the night, he was betrayed, he took the bread, when he'd given thanks, he broke it, and said, This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper, he took the cup saying, this cup, is the new covenant in my blood. Do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.

For whenever you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Tomorrow is Fourth of July, a day that we were reminded of freedom and independence. I hope though, that tomorrow and throughout this rest of the week, and just in your life in general. May you remember that God does not want to have you live in fear or be burden that you will live life and live it well. To live life with joy, with happiness, with freedom, and in Christ. May you give everything to Christ in all, everything, your life, your family, your job. May you trust God with everything. And the Lord will lead and guide you but God has called you to do.

So Let us pray. Father in heaven, Lord, Today we've talked about freedom. Lord, we're all human. We've made mistakes. And it may be that we may have to have some tough conversations and ask for forgiveness, not only to you, but also to maybe those we have harmed in the past. But God, man, it's our desire that we don't live with burden with fear of stress, that we can truly trust and be led by you. And Father, forgive us, for we are sinners. Lord, we go forth with renewed vigor. And as a church community, Lord, may we support one another in fellowship, and also Lord, just in general, Lord, help us to be there for one another. We still have some of our family who are not able to come back yet, we pray for them. And we just asked for those who are dealing with physical hardship especially Lord, we ask for healing. And we ask that Lord you will help them in their journey to overcome what they're dealing with. For for those who are dealing with financial difficulty, bless, leading guide them, and as well Lord, for those who are mentally and emotionally just drained and exhausted God, we pray that you will be there for them to relieve them to bring joy and peace in their hearts. Finally, Lord for those especially whose faith has been challenged, and even question, Lord, we pray that God, renew their spirit with vigor. Remind them that you are God, and that nothing is possible without you. So guide us and all that we do. In Jesus name, everybody said, Amen.

Grace and peace everyone. hold off. We have a few more things. Have a wonderful Fourth of July and be safe