

Freed From Eternal Death – What Now?

The account of Barabbas' undeserved freedom showed us how we can be truly free.

Another person who was part of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, can show us what we should do after accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as a substitute for our deserved death.

This person's name is recorded as Simon of Cyrene.

Remember that every person who was due for crucifixion had to carry their own cross to the spot of crucifixion.

In this case it was up the hill of Golgotha.

Jesus Christ after an unbelievably painful and exhausting, nightlong scourging by Roman soldiers, may have stumbled under the weight of the heavy cross, and unable to rise to His feet again.

Isaiah 52:14 [NIV] *“Just as there were many who were appalled at him, his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness,”*

This is the condition that Jesus Christ was in after His scourging.

Jesus Christ no longer looked like a human being.

A burly Roman officer nearby observed the impossibility of Jesus' continuing to carry His cross.

The Roman soldier looked menacingly at the crowd and seeing Simon of Cyrene, screamed out, *“You – yes you! Get over here and carry this cross.”*

Simon probably was thinking, *“Why me? I don't want anything to do with this business.”*

“What if they in error nail me to the cross I've got to carry.”

“The cross is really heavy, I wonder what He did to deserve to be crucified.”

Once Simon, exhausted, reached the top of the hill, he quickly lay down the cross and melted into the crowd. [**Matthew 27:31-33; Mark 15:15-21; Luke 23:26**]

This had been a critical time in Simon's life and a critical time for all humanity.

If Jesus Christ had quit in those hours of great anguish and excruciating pain, we would **not** have a Saviour.

By carrying Christ's cross, Simon did, in type, what every human being will have to do at some time in our lives.

Romans 3:23 [NIV] *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”*

All of us human beings have failed to qualify to receive eternal life, a glorified state.

Romans 6:23 [NIV] *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

All we earn is eternal death.

Romans 5:6-10 [NIV] *“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”*

We can be free from this death penalty by accepting Christ’s death as a substitute of our own deserved death.

Accepting Jesus Christ’s sacrifice does **not** remove all responsibility from us.

“*Saved through His Life*” a future event.

This is where we can draw a parallel between Simon’s service and what God expects of each one of us, to follow Jesus.

Luke 14:26-27 [NIV] *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”*

What is meant by our act of cross carrying?

Romans 6:1-10 [NIV] *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.”*

Simply put we have to follow Jesus Christ’s example and painfully die on our own cross.

Next we are buried with Jesus Christ through total immersion baptism, to rise with Christ to a new life dedicated to serving our Creator God.

Unless this is our new life we **cannot** become a disciple of Jesus Christ, the only way we will ever receive the gift of eternal life.

John 16:33 [NIV] *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

What did Jesus Christ mean by this statement?

Revelation 12:9 [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down., that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”*

This is a world that is influenced by Satan.

1 John 5:18-19 [NIV] *“We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”*

Satan controls what is happening in this troubled world.

2 Corinthians 4:4 [NIV] *“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”*

This is a world which to the main part is blinded to the gospel message by Satan.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 [NIV] *“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”*

Satan and his servants preach a false message.

What then is our work as a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Matthew 28:19-20 [NIV] *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

This is mostly done by our being an example for others to follow, [**Matthew 5:13-15**] but also, when needed, a verbal testimony. [**1 Peter 3:15**]

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*

“They” are Christians [v10] overcome who?

Satan. [v9]

This will involve sacrifice on our part, which is willingly faced out of gratitude for what Jesus Christ has done for all humanity.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Here we have the Christian life summed up in two verses.

Simon of Cyrene followed Jesus Christ carrying a cross as if it were his own, which in one sense it was.

Jesus was the One who died on the cross that we deserved to die on. Be forever thankful for this sacrifice of Jesus Christ and seek to live a life as a cross-carrying disciple of His.