

freedom in christ

pastor's message



One of the hallmarks of the Christian life is the freedom from sin and its consequences, which we receive from Jesus' finished work on the cross. Jesus Himself said, *"if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"* (John 8:36 NIV). However, the ordinary believer often struggles with sin and experiences less than the desired freedom that is to be experienced in Christ. Why is this so? How can the believer break through to experience greater freedom in Christ and rise up to be a better man or woman of God?

Many books have been written on this subject and I suppose many points can be raised about it. However, let me highlight two truths which I believe are fundamental for one to move on and shine forth for the Lord.

Firstly, Jesus made it very clear when He said, *"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds"* (John 12:24 NIV). This is a reference to repentance and self-

denial. The Bible tells us that God is present in each believer, to transform us into the likeness of Christ. However, it requires us to turn away from our old way of life and allow the Lord to have His way in us. Unless the grain of wheat dies it does not produce more fruit. Paul put it this way: *"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life"* (Gal 6:7-8 NIV). Thus, it is no use looking for a breakthrough and transformation in your life unless you are prepared to let God have His way in your life.

Secondly, Jesus also made it clear that the surrendered life must be lived in continual fellowship and dependence upon Him. *"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing"* (John 15:4-5 NIV). As such it is important that we maintain good devotional habits, such as reading the Bible, reflecting on what the Lord may be saying to us and spending time in prayer. This dependence on the Lord will strengthen us for the challenges of life, and enable us to bear fruit, to breakthrough our old natures and be different.

I would like to add that it is critical for us to maintain a healthy prayer life, because prayer is a crucial component in experiencing the freedom that is to be found in Christ. The apostle Paul warned: *"our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"* (Eph 6:12 NIV). He went on to write about the need to put on the armour of God, that we would be able to stand against the wiles of the evil one. In conclusion he added, *"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests"* (Eph 6:18 NIV). He obviously recognized that prayer played a significant part in the experience of spiritual victory. Thus, if we are going to have breakthroughs in our lives, freedom from areas that tend to stumble us, we need to keep watch over our prayer life and ensure that we do not neglect it. Corrie ten Boom aptly advised, "Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it. A man is powerful on his knees."

Shalom
Edmund de Souza

witness team lim soon beng (editor) keith ng (layout) elena grudgeon (writer) lim fung peen adviser & pastor-in-charge rev edmund de souza asst. pastors rev david wee rev nga mee hee pastor lim chun wai lay ministry staff alvin teh samuel tan neville wee cover eryn yee **witness** is a bi-monthly newsletter of christ methodist church. the views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of christ methodist church or the methodist church in singapore. **cmc** 597 east coast road singapore 429082 tel: 63453934 fax: 64470035