

"We have complete Freedom."

Sunday the 5th of September 2021

Introduction:

Today I have chosen to have another text which will be the basis for the sermon. It is a text which is set for the Friday Daily Office.

The text is from Hebrews 10:19-22 (GNB)

¹⁹ We have, then, my friends, complete freedom to go into the Most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. ²⁰ He opened for us a new way, a living way, through the Curtain—that is, through his own body. ²¹ We have a great priest in charge of the house of God. ²² So let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, with hearts that have been purified from a guilty conscience and with bodies washed with clean water.

Opening prayer:

Heavenly Father, may the words of my lips and may the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing to you, O LORD, our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

"We have complete Freedom."

Complete freedom, sometimes also translated as complete confidence, really made me look at our current situations. We are a people living under lockdown restrictions. Our freedom to come to Church as the body of Christ has been removed from us all under the Public Health Orders.

I would not be presumptuous in saying we all would like to be attending our local Church if we were able to do so. Yet, when the letter to the Hebrews was written, some commentators believed the Church was under persecution, and the followers of Christ, Christians, had lost the freedom to gather together.

Do not hear me say that the Public Health Orders are part of some sort of persecution of the Church of God. I support the Public Health Orders, as they are designed for the overall well-being of our society in the fight against COVID, especially the delta variant.

The author of the letter to the Hebrews, under God's inspiration, is revealing our freedom and confidence to come before the LORD.

We have, then, my friends, complete freedom to go into the Most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. Verse 19.

The picture or illustration that is being used in this case is that of a courtroom. The LORD God is in that Most Holy Place, and the accuser tries to hinder and

stop those approaching God, pointing out they are unworthy. He points his finger at their sin – their unholiness.

Yet as followers of the Christ, the finger-pointing of the accuser comes to naught, as in the same verse we read those comforting words:

We have, then, my friends, complete freedom to go into the Most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. Verse19.

The cross of Christ:

You and I know that at the cross of Christ, he exchanged His righteousness for the unrighteousness of you and I and the rest of humanity. This truth is made clear in verse 20

²⁰ He opened for us a new way, a living way, through the Curtain—that is, through his own body.

The language is returning to the events of Good Friday. How the Curtain in the temple separating the Holy of Holies from the people was torn into two. From Top to bottom: This dramatic event happened once Jesus had breathed his last on the cross. All of humanity can have the freedom to come to God, the ultimate cost of his beloved Son Jesus Christ.

Even during this lockdown, the ability to come into the presence of God at home. The lockdown has not removed this gift from you and I. We have this complete freedom; it is always up to us to follow through.

Hopefully, our current social restrictions may give us all some insights, however small in comparison to those Christian brothers and sisters in Christ. They are some Christians living in countries where it is illegal to express their Christian faith. These Christians may belong to what some call the underground Church.

I can remember clearly talking with Christians from the Sudan, Christian Brothers and Sisters: They share about the various persecutions they experienced in their homeland. The thirty-year war. Where northern Sudanese people were deliberately attacking Christian Communities, all they could do was run.

We all know that there are countries where it is illegal to have a Bible in your possession and where you can face harsh penalties for breaking this law.

Yet today's text is more about the love of God. It is about the freedom we have to approach God. Today's text highlights the difference between Christianity and other religions – Christianity is relational. God with His people. This is explained in the remaining verses:

²¹ We have a great priest in charge of the house of God.

The author of Hebrews reveals that Jesus has become the great high priest. Not only did he remove the Curtain by being the 'lamb of God who takes away our sin' he is the High Priest in Charge of the temple – what does that look like?

So let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, with hearts that have been purified from a guilty conscience and with bodies washed with clean water.

We have the reassurance of being able to come into the presence of God, where we find ourselves. We come not through our own merits but rather through the grace of God. We have been purified from a guilty conscience. We are a forgiven people. You and I have all be washed in the blood of the lamb.

The current Public Health Orders preventing us from coming to Church will change when that is the question. Yet you and I can still enter into fellowship with God, as humbly coming before his presence at home. He invites us all to pray to Him, experiencing more of his love.

The old acrostic may be helpful during this time: I know some of the members of St. John's would use this acrostic in their daily approach to God; If you have not tried this approach before, you may find it helpful. No matter how we approach God, we remember we have '*complete freedom*' to come into His presence through the cross of Jesus.

- ✓ Adoration
- ✓ Confession
- ✓ Thanksgiving
- ✓ Supplications

The time is coming when the doors of the Church will be open, and we can enjoy the fellowship with one another; this to will be a blessing from God.

To God be glory forever. Amen

References:

The Majestic Son – Dr Peter Adam

NICNT Epistle to the Hebrews – F. F. Bruce