

THE UNFETTERED WORD



Always remember that Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David, was raised from the dead. This is the Good News I preach. And because I preach this Good News, I am suffering and have been chained like a criminal. But the word of God cannot be chained.

II Timothy 2:8-9

It was harvest time and the farmer was short of help. He was already close to bankruptcy and it looked as though this harvest would be the end of him if he couldn't get help. One evening there was a knock on the door. It was a stranger looking for work. "You can start tomorrow morning," said the farmer, "and you can sleep in the barn to-night if you like."

The stranger didn't appear to be exceptionally strong ... but somehow he did the work of ten men. In a few weeks the harvest was in and things were looking brighter for the farmer. The stranger began suggesting changes in the farm which frightened the farmer at first. But soon it was obvious that the stranger was as wise as he was strong. In a year or two the farmer was beginning to enjoy considerable wealth.

"My house is quite large. Why don't you move in from the barn?", the farmer said to his mysterious employee. "I'll give you two choice rooms upstairs and you can eat in the kitchen with us."

So the stranger moved into the farmer's house and things kept getting better and better. Then one day the stranger made a proposal to the farmer. "Up to now I've been your servant and I've brought you nothing but good. Now I propose that you make me your partner."

"My partner?" cried the farmer. "Where did you find the nerve to expect to be my partner? The land is mine ... the buildings are mine ... the animals and the equipment are mine. I take you on because you're looking for a job and now you want to be my partner? Instead of making you my partner, I, for my own protection, will have to make you my prisoner!"

So the farmer locked the stranger in his room that night. The next day he fixed a chain to the stranger's left ankle and had bars installed on the windows and the door ... to make sure his valuable prisoner would not escape.

This man who could do the work of ten men made no attempt to break out of his chains. He dragged his chains out into the field and back again in the evening. Each night the farmer chained the man to the bed and locked the door. Then one morning when the farmer came for his prisoner the door was still locked and the bars were still on the windows and the chain was still fastened to the bedpost, but the stranger was gone ... and he was never seen again.



Most of us have already experienced the personal visitation of the Word of God into our lives. In some way God came to us, spoke to us, and as we received this divine Word our lives began to change.

- We were healed.
- Our minds became sane and clear.
- Our fears went away.
- The Word of God came to us in the person of Jesus as a servant ...to help us.

Jesus didn't tie any strings to the blessings he brought us.... any more than he tied strings to his healings of old. But there came a time when the Word of God, after showing us God's goodness and giving us such rich blessings, said,

*"Now I want to be your partner ... not just your helper ... your partner.
I want you to get under the yoke with me and learn from me for I am meek and lowly of heart and you shall find rest for your souls."*

And it was at this point that many of us panicked and began to try to put limits on the Word of God in our lives.

Now understand the Word of God is not fettered. No one can hinder the Word of God from coming forth and accomplishing its purpose on this earth.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty.

Isaiah 55:10-11

**The Word of God will accomplish what it is sent to do on this earth ...
....no man, no devil can hinder it.**

But we can hinder the moving of the Word of God in our individual lives and in the life of our fellowship.

If we choose to do so we can lock it in that room, put chains on it, bar the windows and the doors.



We can do this just as surely as they could bind our Lord and drag Him off to the High Priest and stretch out his body and nail it to a cross.

Of course the fetters they put on Jesus didn't last very long. Jesus remained on that cross, lay in that tomb for a short time, then he burst forth never to be bound again. Likewise, the Word of God in us will yield to our chains and our prison only for a short while. If we try to keep it bound and fettered we'll go there looking for the Word one morning and it will be gone.

One of the greatest marvels of the mercy of God is God's patience with us as we have tried to hinder his Word in our own lives. Why he didn't take his Word away from us long ago is a mystery of grace.

The Word of God is not fettered ... it can go any time it wants to. Yet, the living Word by which God made the world, submits to these limits we put on it, rather than destroy us by withdrawing and leaving us desolate. Like the lamp stand being removed from the midst of a church.

For a brief season the Word of God waits inside our lives. During this time

**....we can take off the restraints and
let the Word come forth in our lives with power ...**

**....or we can keep it locked in that room
until our time of grace is passed and the Word departs...**

The Word of God will come forth in our lives with power....when we remove the following restraints from our hearts and minds.

1. Remove the Hindrance of Unbelief

But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (to bring Christ down to earth). And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead?' (to bring Christ back to life again)." In fact, it says, "The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart." And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:6-9

The divine Word which has the power to raise us into sons of God is already in us ... on our lips, in our hearts. But we have to take off the fetters of unbelief and let it come forth -- confess with our lips ... believe with the heart -- and we have to keep doing this constantly, repenting of our unbelief.

Confessing and believing, again and again.

Believers can hinder the power of the Word in them *through unbelief*. The Book of Hebrews was written to believers who were hindering the movement of the Word, binding the Word in them through un-belief. So the Spirit says to us as he said to them,

"Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts"

**Take off your chains of unbelief.
Let the Word which is in you come forth.**



2. Remove the Hindrance of the Fear of Man

And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus." After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

Acts 4:29-31

Persecution had started and the believers were tempted to be afraid so they prayed for boldness.

Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word.

**Deliver us from fear!
Remove this timidity from our hearts!**

And the prayer was answered.

- The place was shaken,
- They were filled with the Holy Spirit,
- They spoke the word of God with boldness.

We have the same problem. Even without persecution we put fetters on the Word through fear of men. We have to ask the Father to help us get rid of this fear that hinders his Word in us until where we are is shaken, and the Spirit falls, and the Word comes forth from us with boldness.



3. Remove the Hindrance of Mercilessness

But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility. Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.” Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith). These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them. So God’s message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too.

Acts 6:1-7

Things were not right ... Greek widows were being neglected in the daily food distribution.

Notice, that as soon as the believers faced this problem and took care of it the Word of God increased.

And so it will be with us ... when there is a lack of mercy in us or in our life as a fellowship. When we have an indifferent or superior attitude.... It's like putting bars on the door and locking the Word in. But when we repent of this and make the necessary changes, the Word comes forth.

We know where we're being...

Hard.
Unyielding.
Ungiving.
Unforgiving.

....and we know what it's doing to us.



God help us to remove this fetter.

4. Remove the Hindrance of Idolatry

Now Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. So they sent a delegation to make peace with him because their cities were dependent upon Herod's country for food. The delegates won the support of Blastus, Herod's personal assistant, and an appointment with Herod was granted. When the day arrived, Herod put on his royal robes, sat on his throne, and made a speech to them. The people gave him a great ovation, shouting, "It's the voice of a god, not of a man!" Instantly, an angel of the Lord struck Herod with a sickness, because he accepted the people's worship instead of giving the glory to God. So he was consumed with worms and died. Meanwhile, the word of God continued to spread, and there were many new believers.

Acts 12:20-24

We may shake our heads at the ridiculous idolatry of Herod and the people of Tyre and Sidon. But is there any difference between this and the idolatry of covetousness? ... the thorns of cares, riches and pleasures which choke the growth of the Word?

Bring the idolatry to an end.

Turn from the covetous life in whatever form---



--even if it's just dreaming of riches and playing the lottery -- and the Word of God will increase.

5. Remove the Hindrance of a Divided Heart.

Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars. So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect.

Acts 19:18-20

They were believers but their hearts were still divided. Then they started confessing some things that needed to be made right. And some books which belonged to the kingdom of Satan were burned. And the Word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily.

And every time we settle an issue over which our hearts are divided and fix them on the Lord, the Word comes forth with power.

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty,

In unspeakable mercy this Word has come to us.

God has spoken to us, healed and forgiven us, and made his dwelling in us.

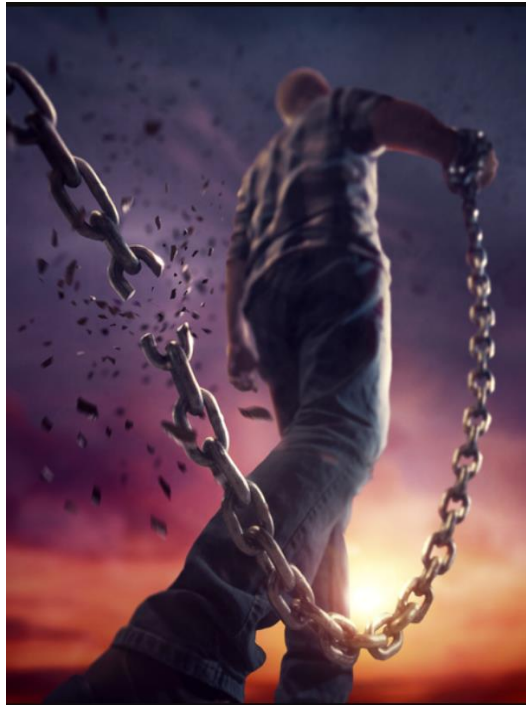
And we have had the audacity to try to put chains on his Word within us, to limit it, to try to make it serve our own purpose.

- Still the Word has not left us.

- Still the Word waits within us for us to get under the yoke and be his partner and learn.

**May God help us this day to remove the hindrances we've put in his way ...
that his Word may not leave us... but come forth in our lives with power...**

...and accomplish what it was sent to do.



Prayer: Lord, we confess that we are hindered in many ways. You have been so patient with us for so long. You have given us so much, continuously blessed us and shown us the way...but yet we have not grasped and welcomed a true partnership with you. We want the benefits without the costs. Help us to unfetter your Word within our hearts, remove the chains that restrain us from your Word coming forth with power in our lives. Help us to remove the hindrance of unbelief, rising above it and confessing you and your goodness again and again. Remove the hindrance of our fear of man. Rescue us from our own timidity. Give us boldness. Shake the world around us. Remove the hindrance of mercilessness from us. We repent of holding unto it. Take it away Lord, it's toxic and ugly and from the pit of Hell. Help us to turn away from all idols in our lives, to turn away from covetousness and the cares of this world. Open our eyes to what is dividing our hearts...and help us to let those things go and make our hearts single and fixed on you alone Oh Lord. And yes Lord, thank you for the unspeakable mercy of your Word which comes to us, for speaking to us, healing us, forgiving us and even dwelling within us. Help us to stop chaining the Word within us, for manipulating for our own purposes. Take these hindrances away so we can accomplish what you send us to do. Amen.

Message: Richard E. Bieber 2009 Nova Scotia

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WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN