

BEWARE THE BURDEN OF BAGGAGE



By Zane Hodges¹

When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, we are justified by faith apart from works. When we trust Him for the free gift of everlasting life, He gives us eternal life. And sometimes, believers who are saved immediately manage to crawl their way out of their dark cavities and find their ways into church. But, lots of times, they're all tied up with addictions. All tied up with bad habits. There are Christians who were saved as little children, but through the process of growing into manhood or womanhood have developed addictions and they're tied up, too. The Christian church needs to be the place where we untie people, where we introduce them to the delivering power of Jesus Christ, to the power that the Word can have in their lives, to the strength that His hands can impart. There's no place in the Christian Church for people who don't care about this. There's no place for people who are unkind and unmerciful, who can't stand that the Church has to work with this addicted person or that addicted person. So, you see, at Victor Street Bible Chapel, it's not enough for us to call it The Game of Church. It isn't enough for us to come here on Sunday mornings and then go back to our daily lives and go back to being the same, addicted people that we were before we came. If you and I are addicted to anything that is contrary to the will of God, then we are going to be unable to untie the new converts that God brings into our midst. Beware of the burden of bondage, but rejoice in the relief of divine release. Believe that God can set you free and anyone else who comes through those doors

In March of 1989, there were a couple of prisoners in the Dorchester County Jail which is located either in or outside of Cambridge, Maryland. Now, this was a 106 year old jail and it was very crowded and these two men were being held with others in a special facility used to ease the overcrowding. Somewhere or another in that facility where they were being held, they found a Bible. This story is not going to turn out the way you think it's going to turn out. Do you know what they used the Bible for? They used it to jimmy the lock on a door and they escaped. That was on Saturday night. Their freedom was short-lived however, and they were rearrested on Sunday and brought back to jail. The sheriff made this interesting comment, "The Bible is the key of all keys. It unlocks lots of doors, even jail doors, apparently." Hey, right on, Sheriff, right on! The Bible does unlock all sorts of doors. It can unlock your jail door because it can introduce you to the power of Christ and to the strength that His hands can impart and you can be free. And you can lead others to be free. Oh yes it's true that Jesus said that whoever commits sin is a servant of sin, but He also said this, "If you remain in My words, then you are My disciples. And you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free." And then He added this, "If the Son shall set you free, you shall be free indeed."



¹ Adapted from a sermon given at Victor Street Bible Chapel in Dallas, TX and transcribed for publishing. Edited for length.

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Unite believers under the banner of God's grace (Eph 4:3-6), **share** the gospel and aid those who will proclaim it faithfully (Rom 10:14-15), **increase** believers' confidence in the power of the indwelling Christ (Gal 2:20), **love** without hypocrisy (Rom 12:9a), **proclaim** the hope of Christ's glorious kingdom (Rom 8:18-21), and **equip** the saints to share Christ's matchless grace and love with others (2 Tim 2:2).

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