

If You Had The Liberty #1

Introduction. Thomas Huxley, a well-known agnostic, once said, "A man's worst difficulties begin when he is able to do as he likes." In James 1:25, the gospel is referred to as the "law of liberty." It is a law of liberty because we are freed from the difficult requirements in the Law of Moses (Colossians 2:13-14). It is also a law of liberty because we are freed from the dominion of sin (Romans 6:7).

Now some people have mistaken the designation "law of liberty" to mean that one can preach any kind of doctrine without any repercussions. But what if you did have the liberty to preach another gospel? What would you preach? If it did not make any difference, you would probably preach what pleases men because it is usually not enjoyable to be different. Let's look at some doctrines which you might preach if you had the liberty to change the gospel.

I. ***If You Had The Liberty To Preach Another Gospel You Might Preach That You Do Not Have To Be Baptized To Be Saved***

- A. You might preach that baptism is just an outward sign of an inward grace or you might preach that it simply designates you as a member of a particular church.
- B. The Bible teaches that baptism is essential to our salvation.
 - 1. Mark 16:16 -- Belief and baptism are joined by the conjunction "and" which emphasizes that both must occur before salvation.
 - 2. Acts 2:38 -- Repentance and baptism are joined by the conjunction "and" which emphasizes that both must occur before the remission of sins.
 - 3. Acts 22:16 -- Baptism washes away sins which equates to salvation (cf. Hebrews 10:22; Revelation 1:5).
 - 4. 1 Corinthians 12:13 -- By one Spirit we are baptized into ("to enter") one body (cf. Acts 2:47).
 - 5. 1 Peter 3:21 -- Baptism saves us under the New Covenant just as Noah and his family were saved through water.
- C. The wisdom of men must conjure up sly arguments and minute sleight of hand with the Greek language to try and subvert the will of the Lord regarding baptism.

II. ***If You Had The Liberty To Preach Another Gospel You Might Preach That You Are Saved At The Point Of Faith***

- A. You might proclaim that simple belief and acceptance of the fact that Jesus is the Son of God is enough to warrant salvation.
- B. Many use passages without their remote context to justify the belief that faith alone saves (John 1:12; 8:24). However, faith without

works, or acts of obedience, is dead and Abraham proved the point beyond question (James 2:21-24).

- C. Faith is one requirement of God's greater plan of salvation. Confession, repentance, and baptism all factor into salvation. Faith moves one to obey (Hebrews 1:11-40)!
- D. In Romans 6:3-4 and Galatians 3:27, baptism is what puts us into Christ with all of the pursuant blessings, but this is never said of faith.

III. *If You Had The Liberty To Preach Another Gospel You Might Preach That The Church Is Free To Do What It Wants*

- A. You might contend that the church has the right to organize itself in anyway it desires or engage in any social endeavor it wishes.
- B. The New Testament shows no organization larger than the local church. Its leadership was composed of elders to oversee the flock and deacons to care for material affairs (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23; 6:1-7; Philippians 1:1).
- C. The local church always carried out its mission of edification (Acts 11:21-23), benevolence (Acts 11:28-30), and evangelism (Acts 13:1-3) without the aid of sponsoring church organization or man-made organizations to facilitate the work of the church.

IV. *If You Had The Liberty To Preach Another Gospel You Might Preach That There Will Be No Judgment*

- A. You might argue that the soul is annihilated at death or the judgment is only meant to scare us in order to render obedience.
- B. However, the New Testament is filled with references to the judgment.
 - 1. Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46.
 - 2. John 12:48.
 - 3. 2 Corinthians 5:10.
 - 4. Acts 17:30-31.
- C. With all of the specific references to judgment in the Bible ("everlasting punishment," "outer darkness," "weeping and gnashing of teeth," and "worm dieth not ... fire is not quenched"), who could truly doubt the reality of the judgment?
- D. Although it might be very comforting to believe that men will not be held accountable to God, it would be a different gospel.

Conclusion. Tonight we will look at four more doctrines which you might preach if you have the liberty. The Bible impresses upon us the need to hold fast to the doctrine which we have learned from the scriptures (Titus 2:1).