

THE FOLLOWING SERMON WAS PREACHED
IN THE LEICHHARDT WESLEY MISSION IN 1971
WHILE I WAS AN ACCREDITED LAY PREACHER

Preacher: Victor J. Smart

Title: “The Yellow Doves Bought In A Second Hand Shop”

Readings: Psalm 68:1-19
Luke 4:16-21

The 68th Psalm, as it is written in the Authorised Version of the Bible, is full of meaning. As we read through those verses we come to a verse that appears to be without meaning:

vs 13 *“Though you have lien among the pots, yet shall you be as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold”.*

One of the most charming of Old Testament pictures seems to be behind this verse.

The story has been told, that during the reign of King David, a bird cage was seen one day, standing in a Second Hand Shop. It contained some yellow doves. A bird lover, passing by the shop, saw those captive doves, and went into the shop in order to purchase those birds and set them free.

Having paid the price, he carried them from their dingy surroundings, out into the open air and allowed them to fly away into the sunshine. As they turned in the air, their wings shone like silver and their bodies like yellow gold.

David, seeing a traditional significance in this story, likened the nation to those captive doves and suggested that, although Israel had been in bondage among the pots and pans of Egypt, God’s strong arms redeemed them and they sang; “He that is our God is the God of salvation.”

“Though you have lien among the pots, yet shall you be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold”.

(1) THE CAPTIVES AND THEIR CAGE:

There were probably two kinds of birds in that cage — those who had never known freedom. They had always gazed at prison bars and knew nothing of the experience of sunshine and the freedom of open space. The other birds had been trapped and brought into captivity, where memory of their freedom brought longing for release.

Now, these captive birds clearly resemble our human experience. For there are those who have never known the freedom to be. All their life they have gazed - as it were – at prison bars: they have not known what it is to be free...Then there are those, like the *‘bird in the gilded cage’* well cared for – pampered – get all they want – but they are still not free.

Bars do not make a prison, nor bars a cage! A person who does not experience freedom of spirit – freedom of mind, is indeed a prisoner... The soul will never be free until it finds its redemption – its freedom, in Jesus Christ. There are worshipping people even, today, who do not yet know this, and are living the life of a prisoner.

Then there is the person who has known freedom, who has experienced the joy of living, but through some experience in life — through some mistake has lost their freedom.

There is no joy like the joy of freedom – the freedom to be. Charles Wesley surely experienced this and expressed it in the words of his hymn:

*“Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound by sin and nature’s night,
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free!
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee”.*

I wonder how many people are among us, who long for that freedom to be? – You can’t free yourself, because you have tried, and failed — You need a Redeemer – someone who will pay the price of your redemption, and set you free!

(2) THE PURCHASER AND THE PRICE HE PAID:

You know – it must have been a remarkably interesting scene in that old Second Hand Shop. There was nothing attractive that caught the eye of that bird lover as he walked in. All that greeted him in the dingy surroundings was the pitiable cry of those yellow doves. Yet – this unknown bird lover saw the awful surroundings and heard the dreadful cry, and it won his heart! For he bought those birds and set them free.

Doesn’t this remind you of an old hymn we used to sing?

*“Somebody came and lifted me
out of my sin and misery.
Somebody came; Oh, who could it be?
Who could it be but Jesus!”*

When other people are not interested in you! When other people are irritated by the moanings and groanings of your trouble! When you look at your own life, and say “How awful! – How dull! – How uninteresting! – How wretched! – How can I ever be free”? — I’ll tell you how you can be free!!!

Jesus Christ is your answer.— Maybe you haven’t realised this yet! He has already paid the price for your redemption, and has set you free — you have already been freed! – didn’t you know that?

During the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln, when he abolished slavery; a traveller was passing a cotton plantation one day, and noticed some negro slaves working in the field.

“Hey”! he called out, “Why are you working like this? Why are you suffering so”?

“Why”? – they called back – “Because we are slaves”!

“But, haven’t you heard the news? The President has abolished slavery. You are free”!!!

At this wonderful news, they dropped their tools, and shouted out for joy — they were FREE!!!

How well do I remember the words of Jesus - “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free!” — YES!

Now, this is the truth that I bring to you today! “Christ has redeemed you! – He has already paid the price”.

When Jesus went into the Synagogue at Capernaum after having survived that dreadful test, of those temptations in the wilderness; He was given the prophecy of Isaiah – and these are the words He read:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken hearted. To preach deliverance to the captives, the recovery of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty, them that are bruised”.

He closed the Book, and all eyes were upon Him. “This day”, He said, “This scripture is fulfilled in your ears”

That was Jesus’ ministry. It has been going on – through the ages – restoring grace and harmony in people’s lives. Setting them FREE! Bringing renewal. Free from sin – free from the discords and imbalance of life.

During His last hours; when His end was drawing near, Jesus prayed:- “Now it My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Save me from this hour? But for this cause I came unto this hour. Father, glorify Your name!!!”

And a voice came from Heaven, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again!”

Jesus said to His disciples, “This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgement of this world. Now is the Prince of this world cast out! Now is to be fulfilled the words of God, that He spoke to the serpent in the Garden of Eden: ‘It shall bruise your head, and You shall bruise his heel’ ”.

Jesus was going to die on a cross at Calvary to pay the price of your redemption, and nobody! — NOBODY can take that price away. You are FREE! Didn’t you know that? Yes, you are ARE free! Are you going to go on living, a slave to your sin? A slave to some habit? Oh! But you are free!!!

(3) THE SONGSTERS IN THE SKY:

When this unknown bird lover went into that Second Hand shop, those birds were probably frightened, and wondered what he was about. But when he carried them out into the sunshine, and released them to the skies; their dreams suddenly came true!

They stretched their wings, and feeling the upward lift of the wind, they gained confidence as they climbed higher and higher into the sunshine where their feathers shone like gold, as the limitless heavens received them. Their term of bondage was ended. Their cries of mourning were replaced with notes of joy! – THEY WERE FREE!!!

Ah! When Jesus Christ calls you to Himself to set you free, it can be a frightening experience because you cannot see what is on the other side of the decision you are to make — but there is nothing to fear. It is simply because it is a new experience to give Him your life. – “Don’t be afraid”, Jesus says, “Only believe”.

I know there are people who long to be free! Who have wandered off the right path – who have taken a hazardous short cut – who long to begin again.

Yes you can! – You can get your bearings again! You can get your life and affairs in order again – you can be free by believing and receiving for yourself the great truth that you have been bought with a price. You have already been set free.

*“There is One who was willing to die in your stead,
that a soul so unworthy might live;
and the path to the Cross, He was willing to tread,
all the sins of your life to forgive”.*

When you open our heart to God, there is always a response:

“I WILL COME IN”, He says

And you shall be free!