

Chillon Castle & The Prisoners of Darkness

Colossians 1:13

*For He delivered us from the domain of darkness,
and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.*

Chillon Castle near Montreux, Switzerland has the best – or worst – dungeon in the world. It impacts each visitor with a fascinating kind of horror. When I visited the castle years ago and traced the steps of its former inmates, I imagined myself in their place and shivered. It all felt eerily real.

Physical Prisoners

Chillon's doomed inmates entered the castle dungeon through a thick wooden trap door set into the stone castle floor, descended a rough wooden ladder, and found themselves in a small cave. Looming in the distance they could see the innermost cave with its inhabitants chained to pillars – pillars to which they would soon be chained. But a strategically placed terror assaulted them as they walked towards their chains, for gallows lined the middle cave. Visions of those gallows must have commanded their days and invaded their dreams. Most would never walk past them, ascend the ladder and once again breathe fresh air. The guards? They walked out alive. Prisoners had no such assurance.

The Bible talks about prisons and prisoners a lot. All kinds of people were physically imprisoned: Joseph, Samson, John the Baptist. Jesus Himself took the place of the prisoner, Barabbas. Physical Imprisonment has one huge benefit: it eventually comes to an end. Spiritual imprisonment, however, lacks this benefit. - unless someone sets spiritual captives free, their imprisonment lasts forever.

Prisoners Aren't All Incarcerated

If you're free to walk the streets and have trouble thinking of yourself as a prisoner, substitute the word "slave" or "victim": someone or something else has power over you, and you're either not free to leave or don't know how. Slavery can take many forms. Its chains could be emotional, or an enslaving relationship, or perhaps a physical disability. There's another kind of slavery, though, that's immensely more devastating: "*spiritual slavery*."

Spiritual Slavery

God applies the reality of spiritual slavery to everyone:

- *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)*
- *we all are "slaves to sin" (Romans 6)*
- *the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)*

We need someone to set us free lest we die in captivity. That's where Jesus comes into the picture.

The Good News: Jesus Reverses Chillon

While Chillon's guards would walk past the gallows and go home to dinner, Jesus stopped at the gallows and hung there Himself. In Chillon's prison, the guards live, and the prisoners die. Jesus changes that scenario: in His kingdom, *He* dies so *we* can exit death. Then He comes to life again so *we* can do the same.

Jesus reverses Chillon. He does so for anyone who asks Him. When we exit our prison, we go past the empty gallows He has left behind. When we climb up our ladder, we meet the living Lord who took our place on the gallows. We don't breathe fresh air alone; we breathe it with Him. Forever.

Have you been a slave to sin? Do you want to be free to act differently? You need only ask, and freedom is yours. Freedom from the prison of spiritual darkness. Freedom to enter the kingdom of God's beloved Son. (Colossians 1:13) Christians truly are free to learn to live a new life, for Jesus unlocks every spiritual chain. (Sometimes he unlocks physical chains as well.) Jesus reverses Chillon.

Does it take time to learn freedom's ways? Yes, it does. Can it be difficult? Absolutely. Will we live out all the freedoms available to us on this earth? That's unlikely. But is it worth the effort? Well, how much do you love fresh air?

John 8:36

If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

Some Crucial Questions

- Do you live in a prison?
- Do you know its name?
- Do you want to leave?
- Have you asked Jesus to set you free? (He always says yes.)
- Do you have trouble believing you've been set free? (Ask the Lord for the faith to believe in freedom's presence. ((Faith is God's gift to us It may come immediately, or it may come most gradually, but it will come.)
- Are you frustrated or confused about how to access that freedom? Ask Him to teach you how to act on your freedom. (His Spirit, His written word, and other believers will help you learn.)

Colossians 1:13

***For He delivered us from the domain of darkness,
and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.***

Chillon Castle & The Prisoners of Darkness

© Lynne Fox, 2017

biblegrapes.com