

Redeemed, I'm Not Who I Used to Be

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

Years ago a friend introduced me to the song "Redeemed." One afternoon shortly after first hearing it, I sat in my parked car overlooking the Pacific listening, not to the thunder of waves but to the heart-piercing message of that song. I listened and I wrote. I put the CD player on "Repeat" to let the words sink deep. Redeemed. New. Free. I listened to the words over and over. Thirty times ... fifty times. I needed these words. I still do. Redeemed. New. Free. Free from who I used to be. Free to live differently from how I used to live. Free to personally access the richness Jesus brings.

Ever since that first hearing, the Lord has been steadily and increasingly showing me how shallow my grasp of freedom was. It's just a song - but what a song. It still can bring tears to my eyes and stir up an aching kind of longing. Mike Weaver (of Big Daddy Weave) seems to have read my heart before he wrote the words to this song. (You'll find a link to it below.)

The song "Redeemed" contains phrases that stir deep inner hurts and hungers: *haunted by ghosts that lived in my past ... shackled ... a prisoner ... bound by heavy chains*. It's rich with promises that beckon us to freedom: *I don't have to be the old man inside of me ... You set me free ... I'm not who I used to be*. He's telling me that I'm a prisoner no more.

Some Prisoners Never Go to Jail

I spend part of my week talking with ex-cons. They're now physically free but often struggling to learn personal freedom. So we talk. We talk about the new creation that springs into being when Christ enters their life and the transformation that takes place at that moment. As they start to believe that they – the person inside – are altogether different from who they used to be. I watch them change. They move beyond physical freedom to personal freedom, internal freedom – new thoughts, new feelings, and new attitudes towards self. And that freedom shows in the way they live. What a blessing.

But these "real" ex-cons aren't the only prisoners in society. I also am an "ex-con" with a shackled past who sometimes still feels like a prisoner. I believe these truths I tell others – I really do – and in many ways I live them out. But then the Lord used this song to show me that I at times still behave like I'm incarcerated. Restrained. Shackled to ghosts with whom I identify, ghosts with names like Outsider, Disqualified, and Intruder. I've learned about internal freedom, but often don't feel free to act on it.

In chapter 14 of his children's novel, [Gaal the Conqueror](#), John White describes two prisoners caged behind bars that seem like solid steel. I say "seem" because the bars disappear into nothingness when the prisoners simply dare to walk through them. The bars are illusions. Dare I hope that my bars are also illusions? That the ghosts who imprison me have no power to restrain me? That I, a new creation in Christ, am free not only to *be* new but also to *walk* in newness of life? Does the Lord want me to risk walking through my bars? Of course. That's why He showed me this song.

Thank you, Lord, for a song that's opening my eyes to yet untasted freedoms. (And thanks also to the friend who played me this song. You know who you are.)

Do you still feel like a prisoner of your past?

If so, are you willing to walk out of your cell?

Do you believe that God makes each Christian (including you) into a new creation in whom He delights?

Follow-Up

- Listen to and watch **Redeemed**, sung by Mike Weaver of Big Daddy Weave. Before he sings about his journey from shame to humility, Mike tells the powerful story that led him to write the words of this song.

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/embed/RornLHjfma8>

- Read [Being Me at the Airport](#). (I'll tell you the story of my own journey from shame to humility.
- Read my book *[Grappling with Your Identity](#)*. I pray it will help you connect with God's gift of self-worth.)

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