



Links Players

Wagering for Freedom

For the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23, NASB)

I love getting something for free, or at least the perception of it being “free.” For example, I played in the Humana pro-pro challenge (formerly the Bob Hope) several years ago. This was my first tour-level, amateur event and when I registered to get my swag, it was amazing. Shoes, a club bag, balls, tees, pullovers, shirts and more! It was like Christmas in January.

In truth, all this stuff wasn’t free, it was all part of the entry fee. Unlike our decision to follow Jesus, the price for the swag is paid in the thousands of dollars to be part of the golf tournament. However, the entry fee into the Kingdom of God is surrender—the choice to give up your will to follow his will for your life.

As Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:5, forgiveness was “...freely bestowed on us in the beloved.” Jesus’ sacrificial death on a cross for our sin was a free gift from God.

The Old Testament is filled with pictures of redemption. The greatest of these historical events is God’s rescue of Israel from Egypt’s tyranny. God sent Moses to his people with a message that included instructions for their supernatural rescue from slavery.

The Israelites were to sacrifice an unblemished lamb and spread the blood on the doorpost and lintels. When the death angel saw the blood, he would pass over. In other words, they had to hear, believe, and obey in order to live.

In like manner, if we are to be free from slavery to sin and death, we must hear, believe, and obey. The primary difference is they sacrificed an animal (a picture of one to come) in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, God the Father sacrificed his own Son, “...the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Furthermore, what the prophet Jeremiah wrote to Israel remains true for us today, “For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with your heart” (Jeremiah 29:11-13). God would never make that promise if he didn’t intend to fulfill it. If you seek him, you will find him. You have his word on it.

Blaise Pascal, the pioneer of modern probability theory and devoted follower of Christ from the seventeenth century, once argued for belief in Christ as a “wager.” If you are a gambling person, one

who likes a friendly bet on your favorite sports team, you must understand the odds and probability of winning. The higher the odds, the higher the return on your bet. That is because there is a much greater chance of losing.

The wager you make on Jesus is a guarantee and the odds makers would make it 1:1, in other words, you win every time.

The risk involved in rejecting Jesus is certain failure. The consequences of death without knowing the Creator and Redeemer of the world are unspeakable. Wager on Christ and win!

Prayer: Father, we ask, seek, and knock for your Spirit to penetrate the hearts of who don't know you.

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Chris Hermann

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