

Freedom
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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

John 8:31-36

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*
32 *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*
33 They answered him, *We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?*
34 Jesus answered them, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*
35 *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.*
36 *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

Tuesday of this week is Independence Day in the United States of America.

We will celebrate our freedom with hot dogs, watermelon, games and fireworks that symbolize the bombs bursting in air and the battles that were fought and continue to be fought to preserve the freedom we all love and often take for granted.

We are not the only country in the world whose citizens have a great deal of freedom; we are just the biggest and the best and the one that has been most blessed of the Lord in our world today.

It seems that nearly everyone in less prosperous places in the world wants to come to the United States.

There is a legal and proper way for immigrants to come to our country and there are many that use it.

There are many others; far more others, that choose to sneak in illegally.

Understandable as it may be for someone to want to better their family's lives by living in the US; many serious problems arise from it.

Without getting into the giant list of problems that are caused; perhaps the greatest one occurs in the populations both of the legal and the illegal groups.

Many do not want to assimilate into our culture. They want to bring in their own former culture which is what made the country they left less desirable than being here.

Thus, they diminish the value of America rather than contributing to it.

It is very much like the man who trusts Jesus to save him; he is set free from the bondage of his sins but he insists on bringing his old sinful culture with him into his new life.

Like the immigrants who are free to keep to themselves and speak their native languages and remain in their former culture; poor choice though it may be; each and every believer is free in the same way.

You are free; you can remain in your old way of life or you can choose a better way.

There are many things that affect our lives when we are set free by trusting Jesus to save us.

Freedom in Christ is something few people seem to really understand.

I. Jesus gives us a choice.

A. You can assimilate into your new Christian culture.

1. This means that because you choose it, you can get baptized and become part of the church.
2. Baptism is a big first step in becoming a profitable servant of the Lord; but, you must choose it.
3. Being a part of a real Church is essential to bearing fruit as a Christian; but again, you must choose it.

B. You can go on to take upon yourselves various roles of responsibility.

1. These new activities, whether in areas of service or simply participating in fellowship and Church activities, are very important.
2. These things are they which will replace the activities and culture of your old life.
3. But you must choose them.

C. Or you can choose to continue in your old life.

1. You can continue in your old habits.
2. You can continue fellowshipping with your old crowd.
3. You can fight against your new righteous spirit as the Lord convicts you of sin.
4. Some Christians are like a prisoner who has served his sentence; the prison door has been opened, but he refuses to leave his cell.

II. Jesus gives us a change.

A. *When Jesus saves us, there is a change that immediately takes place.*

1. Our “dead in sins” spirit is passed from death to life.
2. **John 5:24** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*
3. This is no lightweight event!
4. Before salvation, your spirit was dead in trespasses and sins.
5. **Ephesians 2:1** *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*
6. You didn’t have a choice then; you were the servant of sin; your life was ruled exclusively by Satan and your own sinful flesh.

B. *But now you have a choice!*

1. Your flesh is still as it was; God did not save your flesh.
2. Satan is still alive and well and busy doing what he has always done.
3. The reality of difference is that the new man; your Spirit, is now alive and re-created in the Lord.

4. **Ephesians 4:21-24**

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

5. The big change is that our new living spirit who is now righteous also has a new and righteous desire; **a desire to serve the Lord.**

6. You are free to choose or not; glory happens when one who is free, freely chooses Jesus.

III. Jesus now gives us a challenge.

A. *In Christ, you are now completely free.*

1. You are blessed of God, you will spend eternity in heaven with the Lord, you are greatly loved...and there is nothing anyone or anything - or anything that may occur - that can take any of that away...You are free!

2. You did nothing to obtain your salvation and there is nothing you must do to keep it.

B. However, with freedom comes responsibility.

1. There are consequences for the misuse of freedom.

2. There are consequences for the misuse of the freedom we possess as Americans; we have all experienced some of these.

3. You are free to drive our roads but there are consequences for misusing that freedom.

3. There are likewise consequences for the misuse of our spiritual freedom.

4. Some would say, "God says we are free but then He punishes us if we practice our freedom; how is that fair?"

C. God is rarely punishing us; there are simply consequences for our actions.

1. Every Christian has sin that they allow in their lives.

2. Someone once said the only way to live above sin is to get an apartment over a beer joint.

3. You smokers, for example. You are free to keep on smoking.

a. But your health will greatly suffer.

b. You will suffer significant financial loss; both from the cost itself and the medical bills from your diminished health.

c. You will suffer lost blessing here and reward in heaven you would otherwise have because of things you cannot be allowed to do because of the bad example you set.

d. You will suffer diminished job and advancement opportunity...and more.

3. There are lots of other sins that cost us in lots of other ways...but you are still free.

4. This does not discount the fact that God will take us to the woodshed; particularly over sins that hurt and mislead other believers.

Conclusion:

God challenges us to use our freedom for things that are profitable.

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*

Freedom is the opposite of bondage.

There are many kinds of bondage:

- **there is the bondage of sin;**
- **there is the bondage of certain besetting sins;**
- **there is religious bondage (this is the angry brother we learned about last week);**
- **being in Church because you think you have to;**
- **serving because you think you have to;**
- **giving because you think you have to;**
- **and then you are angry when someone else does not comply, as you discover that you are not serving out of a willing and glad heart yourself.**

Anything you do because “you have to” is a waste of your time and effort.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Look what God says about giving:

2 Corinthians 9:6-7-8

6 But this / say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so *let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work:

What do you suppose God cares about most?

How much you give?

Or whether you give willingly and cheerfully with a glad heart?

How many are there whose giving is not blessed because it comes not by choice from a glad and thankful heart?

I am free to live any way I choose.

I choose to live for Jesus; albeit not perfectly.

Freedom is choice. Only choice can demonstrate love.

I'm here because I love the Lord who died for me and rose again to save me from my sins... and because I love you...why are you here?