

True Freedom

This weekend many celebrated the 4th of July. If we were to do a survey of the American people we'd probably be shocked to find out how many people do not know what the 4th of July is about.

They may say cookouts, fireworks, family time.....similarly to Easter and Christmas, the reason for the 4th of July is often forgotten and overlooked today as many celebrate something just because they always have or because everyone else does it. We could help that by calling it Independence Day for starters.

Independence Day is a time to celebrate the independence, the freedom that the American colonies declared 239 years ago from their oppressors....the British.

Freedom is what they desired. They were being controlled by the British. They realized their God given rights were being restricted. They experienced religious persecution, unfair taxation, used and abused by a government that did not treat them as equal.

History tells us that even under all of these circumstances, approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the people wanted to remain under the rule of England. Another $\frac{1}{3}$ didn't want any part of "politics". But the remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ were the activists who argued for freedom. These were the radicals, they knew the only way to receive freedom was to take extreme measures.

Did you catch the fact that they were outnumbered, $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$? Not only were they outnumbered but those who were not in support of freedom doubled them in number. It's because of this group of radicals that we have the honor and the privilege of living in this free country today.

This nation was formed as a nation under God. Go read the Declaration of Independence...get on our website and listen the the message "Land of the Free?" that I preached a year ago.

There were a small number of radicals that were out numbered but they knew their God given rights and despite being outnumbered, they stood for righteousness, they fought for freedom, and they were victorious!

Our country that was founded under God is now a nation that tries to push Him out. The church is probably the most oppressed people group in the US even though religious freedom was one of the primary reasons independence was pursued in the first place!

Church....today I declare to you that if even a few in this country will stand for Jesus, despite being outnumbered, we will be victorious!

Romans 8:31 (NKJV)

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Do you know what “these things” are? Read Romans chapter 8, that’s your homework for this week. Paul teaches about freedom from sin, becoming children of God with the indwelling of His Spirit, and then right before 8:31 Paul teaches about the sufferings of this world. (these things)

Because you can be free from sin, because you can be a child of God, because His Spirit can live in you, we say to these things, the sufferings that don’t even compare to the glory of God that will be revealed in us....If God is for us, who can be against us!

That is why it only takes a few. If a few of God’s people can grasp freedom from sin, adoption as sons and daughters, and realize this world has nothing on you....we can lead a revolution. We can see our nation changed! We can see the oppressed set FREE!

Our nation mostly accepts and even promotes things like abortion, homosexual relationships and marriage, divorce, pornography, strip clubs, feminism, pride, witchcraft, drunkenness, love of money.....the very things that they Word of God condemns are promoted as freedom???

Just like our nation's founders, it's going to take some radicals....people who will go to extreme measures to declare the truths of God.....THAT will bring true freedom!

It can start with us.....but where do we even begin?? Let's see what they Word of God says true freedom looks like.

John 8:31-36 (NKJV)

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

33 They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free’?”

34 Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

For the individual and for all of creation....that is true freedom. Too many people think Christianity is restricting, or it’s following a bunch of rules....that’s not at all what it is. If you desire freedom, Christ is the one who can actually set you free!

John 8:31 (NKJV)

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

Freedom begins with belief. Our nation's founders believed their god given rights were being violated, they believed not only that it SHOULD be changed, but it COULD be changed. They believed God's Word.

Belief in Jesus is where Freedom starts in your life. Belief that He is who He says He is. Belief that He died for your sins. Belief that He rose from the grave defeating death, resurrected in eternal life. Believe that He loves you and did these things for you. That's saving faith....belief.

In that belief is also trusting that His Word is true. Trusting in His promises.

He says "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed" --- to abide means to remain in. You can't remain in something without trusting that it's true, you'd probably never really buy in to begin with.

But once you believe and you trust the Lord's Word as true...you must remain in it. Remaining in it shows if you are a true disciple.

Listen, life is challenging, it's hard, but we have to make the choice to abide in Christ, to persevere in obedience to the scriptures. This means when life tells you lies, you continue in the truth. When the world around you embraces sin as the norm, you deny it and pursue righteousness! Abide in Christ!

1 John 2:6 (NKJV)

6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Abiding in Christ is the evidence of genuine faith! A genuine believer perseveres, obeys and practices Jesus' teachings. If you abide in Jesus you are His disciples indeed!

John 8:32 (NKJV)

32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

You see there is only one way to know TRUTH, continuing to believe and obey the Word of God! Knowing the truth will set you free!

Some people don't understand freedom. They may want to be free, thinking it means do whatever they want. You can be allowed to do whatever you want but that doesn't at all make you free....every single thing you do has consequences. Being free to always do what YOU want leads to SIN....sin does not make you free. Sin has consequences.

In Romans 8, Paul tells us about freedom from indwelling sin. It comes by walking in the Spirit, living according to the Spirit.....that is where true freedom is!

I used to have a very different take on freedom. I used to think drinking as much as I wanted was freedom. Being able to look at whatever and whoever I wanted was freedom. Putting people down or embarrassing them while not caring how it may make them feel was freedom.

Now I realize that freedom is never again waking up with a hangover, wondering if I did anything stupid last night, then regretting what I did. Freedom is not having guilt and shame for looking at pornography, realizing that's someone's daughter. Freedom is edifying people to make them feel better instead of seeing how bad I could make them feel.

Sin binds us. Sin removes the freedom that you do have. Sin weighs you down...

Hebrews 12:1b (NKJV)

..... let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us

Galatians 5:1 (NKJV)

5 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

The truth says we can be free of sin! Walking in the truth brings true freedom. Remain in Christ and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free!

John 8:33 (NKJV)

33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?"

Here we see the Jews offended at Jesus' comment that the truth will make them free. They think "Free....free from what?" We were born free! It's our birthright! How can we be any more free than this???

Some of you might feel that way right now....

I fear that this is the mindset of most of those in our great nation today. "I'm from the land of the free! This is as free as it gets, I can do what I want, I was born free and have been free all my life! How can I be any more free than this???"

Jesus speaks of SPIRITUAL freedom! There is sooo much more to this life than pleasing yourself! Being able to do what you want to do is not freedom when you consider the negative consequences.

John 8:34-35 (NKJV)

34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.

By “whoever commits sin” this is not referring to every person and every sin. We are all sinners when we walk in the flesh to please ourselves instead of walking in the Spirit to please our Lord.

John is saying whoever makes the choice of sin, whoever chooses the way of wickedness instead of the way of holiness, they are a slave of sin. They are in bondage.

Hear this....if you choose to live in sin, you are a slave to that sin....whatever it is. If you do it by choice day after day, you are not repentant and you become a slave to it.

Proverbs 5:22 (NKJV)

22 His own iniquities entrap the wicked man,
And he is caught in the cords of his sin.

Living a life of sin binds us and then it places us under the condemnation of the law where we receive the sentence of eternal punishment. This sin then determines our destiny.

Satan does not allow for freedom. He came to steal, kill, and destroy. He will try to take your joy, your life, your soul and leaves you bound and afflicted. He doesn't give you a choice of what to do next (false freedom). He leaves you with only one course to follow in a position of bondage, powerless to defeat him on your own. A SLAVE

A slave to sin does not have a place in the Kingdom of God. Praise Jesus He provides a way out. Adoption as sons and daughters. Rebirth by the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that we may be free from sin and being free from sin being made a slave to righteousness.
FREEDOM

John 8:36 (NKJV)

36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

When Jesus makes you free from sin....you will be free, unrestrained, not bound, that is true freedom

That freedom can be yours today! In a moment you'll have a chance to receive it, don't let fear or doubt stop you from responding.

This week we have been celebrating our independence from tyranny and bondage to an oppressive government, and independence won over 200 years ago. We celebrate an independence, as a nation, that is temporary. A day will come when we no longer enjoy the freedoms we have.

While we should celebrate our independence, shouldn't we, daily, celebrate our independence from the tyranny and bondage of guilt, sin, fear, and death; an independence won over 2,000

years ago? Should we not celebrate and discover the depths of an independence that will last for all of eternity?

Remember.....our nation's founders were out numbered. But when you stand for God, He is on your side, He is bigger, He is stronger, He wins....

It just takes a faithful group to reject sin, pursue Christ...that is what will save our nation....

Proverbs 14:34 (NKJV)

34 Righteousness exalts a nation,
But sin is a reproach to any people.

If you want to see this nation turned around, it's not going to take the wisdom of man, but instead the righteousness of God...in men!

"America was founded by people who believe that God was their rock of safety. I recognize we must be cautious in claiming that God is on our side, but I think it's all right to keep asking if we're on His side."

~ Ronald Reagan

"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. For that reason alone, people of other faiths have been afforded freedom of worship here."

~Patrick Henry

PRAYER

FOR: Repentance President Obama Supreme Court Congress State and Local Government Churches Christians Youth	AGAINST: abortion homosexuality divorce religion pornography feminism pride witchcraft drunkenness gambling entertainment - music, TV love of money
---	---