

## TRUE FREEDOM

### Introduction

1. On June 28, 1776 a draft was brought to the Continental Congress and debated until July 4. Finally on that date, a unanimous vote of the colonies was secured. Here's the closing paragraph of that historical document that even now guards our freedoms in this country. **WE, THEREFORE, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, IN GENERAL CONGRESS, ASSEMBLED, APPEALING TO THE SUPREME JUDGE OF THE WORLD FOR THE RECTITUDE OF OUR INTENTIONS, DO, IN THE NAME, AND BY AUTHORITY OF THE GOOD PEOPLE OF THESE COLONIES, SOLEMNLY PUBLISH AND DECLARE, THAT THESE UNITED COLONIES ARE, AND OF RIGHT OUGHT TO BE FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, THAT THEY ARE ABSOLVED FROM ALL ALLEGIANCE TO THE BRITISH CROWN, AND THAT ALL POLITICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THEM AND THE STATE OF GREAT BRITAIN, IS AND OUGHT TO BE TOTALLY DISSOLVED; AND THAT AS FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, THEY HAVE FULL POWER TO LEVY WAR, CONCLUDE PEACE, CONTRACT ALLIANCES, ESTABLISH COMMERCE, AND TO DO ALL OTHER ACTS AND THINGS WHICH INDEPENDENT STATES MAY OF RIGHT DO. — AND FOR THE SUPPORT OF THIS DECLARATION, WITH A FIRM RELIANCE ON THE PROTECTION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE, WE MUTUALLY PLEDGE TO EACH OTHER OUR LIVES, OUR FORTUNES, AND OUR SACRED HONOR.**
2. I am grateful that we have freedom in United States. As we celebrate this weekend we can thank God that we have freedom to live and make decisions and worship God without fear of punishment or death. We are free largely because our founding fathers understood the **providence of God** and the **nature of man**. Unfortunately, people in power, even now, continue to write laws that undermine that freedom, and worse, undermine the true God who alone can grant real freedom. As great as our freedom is in these United States, it is not secure and it is not enough.
3. Suppose our nation was subjected to forces of evil on the outside. We can declare our freedom, but there exists a force more powerful than us that stands ready to take it away. If threatened, even if we were able to muster all of our military might and mental determination to preserve our freedom - it would not be enough. Even if we were able to overcome incredible odds, we remain vulnerable. It is not enough.

4. I am thankful to God that we are a strong nation with a powerful military and sophisticated weaponry. I am thankful that we have developed medical technology that continues to make gains on life threatening diseases, providing us with longer, healthier and more productive lives. But it is not enough. Oh, if only there was something that was more secure, more predictable, more permanent. If only our freedom was not subject to outward forces or inward enemies. Is there real freedom that cannot be taken away? Consider these words from Jesus in John 8.
5. (John 8:30-47) <sup>30</sup> **As he was saying these things, many believed in him.** <sup>31</sup> **So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,** <sup>32</sup> **and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."** <sup>33</sup> **They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"** <sup>34</sup> **Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.** <sup>35</sup> **The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.** <sup>36</sup> **So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.** <sup>37</sup> **I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you.** <sup>38</sup> **I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."** <sup>39</sup> **They answered him, "Abraham is our father."** **Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did,** <sup>40</sup> **but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did.** <sup>41</sup> **You are doing the works your father did."** **They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God."** <sup>42</sup> **Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.** <sup>43</sup> **Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.** <sup>44</sup> **You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.** <sup>45</sup> **But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.** <sup>46</sup> **Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?** <sup>47</sup> **Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."** Wow! So what was Jesus saying about real freedom?

## I. REAL FREEDOM IS FOUND ONLY IN THE SON

### A. Only the Son brings real freedom.

1. Some of the Jews heard Jesus and basically believed what He was saying (8:30-31), but apparently did not fully understand who He was (8:33). Whatever they believed about Him, was something short of saving faith.
2. Who is Jesus? He is God, the Son. He is the one the Father sent to earth to identify with people and to die as a perfect, voluntary, sacrificial, atoning offering for the sins of those who would believe. (Note vv. 27-29 – ***27 They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. 28 So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. 29 And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him"***).
3. Throughout the Gospel of John, the apostle continued to hammer out his purpose for writing. ***"These are written... that by believing, you might have life through His name!"*** Only in Christ is their freedom – only in Christ is there life! Only the Son brings real freedom!

### B. Only those who belong to the Son are free

1. These nominal "believers" **thought** they were free. They were **confident** they had never been slaves of anyone. But Jesus reminded them that everyone who sins is a slave to sin – is in bondage to sin. Whatever freedom we have or think we have, at best it is very limited and very temporary. We are attached to the chain of sin.
2. These nominal "believers" were banking on their **heritage**, but they were in the wrong family! They followed their father, the devil. And that is true of all who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. But if we know the Son, we are free. Because if the Son sets us free we are indeed free! And there is nothing that can separate us from that freedom! "A slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to that family forever! (Do I need to remind you of Romans 8:28-39)? Real freedom is found only in the Son.

## II. REAL FREEDOM IS FOUND ONLY IN RIGHTEOUSNESS (Rom. 6:17-21 – ***you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of***

**righteousness.** <sup>19</sup>*I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.* <sup>20</sup>*For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.*<sup>21</sup> **But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death).** In Christ, having been declared righteous, we are in effect...

A. Set free from sin

1. We have been set free from the **penalty** of sin which is death. The law said "Guilty." Christ came and fulfilled the law and bore the penalty exacted **by** the law in order that we might be set free **from** the law. And having been set free from the law of sin and death, we are absolutely free!
2. The way we have been set free from sin is by Christ satisfying the charge against us (that removes the chains), and then He clothed us in His righteousness making us acceptable to a holy God. Therefore, sin no longer has its hold on us!
3. It is amazing that having been set free from the law of sin and death, that we would voluntarily return to enslave ourselves again to the very thing for which Jesus died to set us free. We have been set free from sin's penalty and we are being released from its power. And that freedom allows us to do what's right – what is righteous, what is pleasing to God. So because we are declared righteous, we are set free from sin and...

B. Set free to do right

1. We are not set free to do as we want. We have been set free so that we can do what we ought. We have been set free from sin so that we can live righteous lives.
2. Before salvation, we could do nothing that would merit God's favor. Our behavior was marred by sin continually. But now, having been saved from sin, we can live righteous lives. The capacity to live lives that please Him has been given to us if we have trusted the Lord Jesus! We have been set free to the point that we can live right with God and right with others. He has changed us to do so. And no one can take that freedom away from us if we know Him! Let's go one step further: Real freedom is found only in the Son and it is found in the righteousness applied to us – again, through the Son. But in a sort of twist...

### **III. REAL FREEDOM IS FOUND IN SUBMISSION (to the Son) (Rom. 6:22 - *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life*).**

#### A. We have a new Master.

1. We assume that to be in bondage is bad and to be free from bondage is good. And we define freedom as the ability to do whatever we want to do whenever we want to do it.
2. Paul, however, reminds us that no one is absolutely free. We are either in bondage to sin, which leads to death, or we are bound to God which leads to holiness and life. As a slave of sin, I was under the very worst bondage with no real choices and in line for certain judgment, without escape. Even if I thought I could do whatever I wanted, I was powerless to do anything that pleased God or that would remove the judgment of condemnation and separation from God and all that is good, forever! So much for freedom! But as a slave of God, I have been set free from the tyranny of sin and I have been set free from the certainty of judgment and I have been given the incredible privilege of serving the One who loved me and gave Himself for me in order that I could be set free from these things that pull me down and destroy me. And then on top of that, I have been given that which builds me up and grants me favor with God forever!
3. So having believed in Jesus, I now have a new Master. My Master is not sin; it is Jesus! So as bond-servants of Jesus, we are free! Our freedom is found in our new Master!

#### B. We have a new purpose.

1. I read someone who wrote that the purpose in life is to find our freedom. Actually, that's not correct. The purpose in life is to find our Master. Once we have found the Master, we have found our freedom. (And actually, we didn't really find Him. In fact, we weren't even looking. It was God who pursued us and bought us and placed us into His family and elevated us to the status of adult sons, giving to us all the rights and privileges as such. Talk about an independence day!
2. Remember, when the Son sets you free, you are really free! And the benefit we receive from this independence from sin is a life acceptable to God, which leads to

eternal life in the very presence of Christ Jesus our Lord! Who would have guessed that our freedom rests in our submission to Jesus?

## Conclusion

1. Now I do thank God that I live in the United States of America - that I have freedom in this country! But it is not enough. On March 11, 1792, George Washington wrote to a friend (John Armstrong): ***I am sure there never was a people who had more reason to acknowledge a divine interposition in their affairs than those of the United States; and I should be pained to believe that they have forgotten that agency which was so often manifested during our Revolution—or that they failed to consider the omnipotence of that God who is alone able to protect them.***
2. Washington's pain concerning the forgetfulness of a nation has surely been multiplied over these past 224 years since he wrote that letter. Whatever we are as individuals or as a country is due to the greatness and the goodness of God. And we who belong to Him have every reason to tell others of that goodness and greatness. But hear me, please. Even if this country crumbles into ruin, having rotted from the middle out, if we are in Christ, we are free. We are safe. We have an allegiance to a King who will not be voted out of office or overthrown by a greater power. We belong to Jesus. Our citizenship is in heaven. We have been set free from sin and its power, and we will one day be separated from all that is sinful and corrupt, when we are in His divine presence forever. That, my friends is true freedom which cannot now, nor ever, be taken away.
3. I praise God that I have a family and a place to live and food to eat and I am free to move around and make choices and do what I think is right. But that is not enough.
4. My independence day came when the Holy Spirit of God took the Word of God and quickened my heart, making it alive! He brought me to the place where I suddenly saw my utter lostness and spiritual deadness and my total helplessness to do anything about my condition. But at the same time, realizing what Jesus did, and responding to His efficacious call, I bowed to His sovereign love and cried out for mercy and trusted in Him for my eternal salvation. And at that moment He washed me of my sins and declared me righteous and brought me into His family where I was set free from sin and death and made alive in Him. And I am free! And there is no power on earth or anywhere else in all of creation that can take that freedom away!

5. Today on this Independence Day weekend, 2016, I am asking God to draw people to Himself - to set them free from sin and to grant to them eternal life. If you do not know Jesus, if you are not trusting wholly in Him, please call out to Him to save you from your sins – and then you will know the freedom He alone can grant to your soul!
6. And if you are in Christ, I am asking God to remind you that you have been set free from sin and that you have no right or reason to live any longer in sin. You have been set free from sin's bondage and you have been joined to Jesus Christ as His bond-servant - a relationship that is not a burden, but a glorious blessing in view of the price that has been paid for you and the freedom from condemnation that has been declared to you. I am asking God to remind you that there is no greater freedom than to be a blood-bought, disciple of Jesus Christ.
7. I am free! I will shout it to the heavens! I am free! I declare my independence from the world, the flesh and the devil, from the bondage and penalty of sin. I am free. And it is all because of Jesus Christ. And He, my friends, is enough!