



## CrossRoads Notes:

Turn your Bibles to 1 Peter 2:16

*Title: Proclaiming Freedom in Christ*

*Theme: Living Responsibly Before Christ and Men*

1 Peter 2:16, “Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. The King James Bible translates 1 Peter 2: 15-16 as, “For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.” Let us pray!

**Introduction:** *There was a song written over 175 years ago that has blessed many in America titled “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee.”* Listen to these words. “My country, ‘tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing: land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrims’ pride, from every mountainside let freedom ring!”

My native country, thee, land of the noble free, Thy name I love; I love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and templed hills; My heart with rapture thrills like that above.

Let music swell the breeze, and ring from all the trees. Sweet freedom’s song: Let mortal tongues awake, let all that breathe partake; let rocks their silence break, the sound prolong.

Our father’s God, to thee, Author of liberty, to thee we sing: Long may our land be bright with freedom’s holy light; protect us by thy might, great God, our king!”

**Proposition:** I would propose to you that Christians in America are called by God’s Word to live in such a way that proclaims freedom, freedom from the bondage of the flesh, the lures of the world and from the lies of the devil. The Liberty Bell has a portion of Leviticus 25:10 prominently displayed in a band around the top: “...proclaim liberty throughout the land.” (America’s Christians History)

**Interrogative Sentence:** *Just what are the benefits and responsibilities of living in a country founded by God fearing men?* How do Christians express a life of liberty?

**Transitional Sentence:** *The first step to proclaiming freedom is to recognize God’s sovereignty over all things and praise the Lord for the freedoms we enjoy.* Psalm 37: 3-4 says, “Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desire of your heart.”

This psalm was written by King David in his old age, (The Treasury of David) and was inspired by the Holy Spirit for the calming of the minds of the people of the Lord as they are faced with everything that stands against the truths of God’s Word. King Solomon, the son of David, knew of the sovereignty of God and he was not ashamed to praise the Lord. In 1 Chronicles 6:4 we read of him saying, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who with His hands fulfilled what He promised with His mouth to my father David...”

King Solomon "...showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the statutes of his father David..." (1 Kings 3:3) When the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, Solomon responded with, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart..." (1 Kings 3:5-6)

It was during this time with the Lord, Solomon asked for a very special endowment, his prayer was, "...give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong..." (1 Kings 3:9) Solomon, king of Judah and Israel is known for being the king whose reign was peaceful. The people enjoyed freedom, and he had world wide fame because of the wisdom God had given him. (Who's Who in the Bible; Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31)

The Founding Fathers of the United States of America knew that the fear of the Lord was needed before they could enjoy liberty. The Jefferson Memorial includes these words of Jefferson, "God who gave us life, gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever." (America's Christian History)

In a message, "Let Freedom Ring," Bible Teacher David Mains points out some of those freedoms or liberties we have in America because of the faithfulness our "Founding Fathers" had in the truths of God's Word. They are:

1.) "Political Freedom" – We have a voice in our government, as well as the opportunity to take part in its decisions. We can even speak freely in praise or share our opinions without fear of being arrested.

2.) "Social Freedom" – We have the right to exchange ideas about what we believe. For example because of freedom of the press, you can publish facts, ideas and opinions without government involvement. This also includes TV and radio programming.

3.) "Economic Freedom" - For the most part you can pick the job you want to interview for and through hard work train for any field or trade. For the most part the harder you work the farther you can go. You can save money, invest, spend your money on what you want.

4.) "Freedom of Religion" – The fact is in this country you can choose your religion, choose to ignore any kind of religion and choose not to believe in God if you so desire. There is no law stating you must have any kind of religious belief.

Through the hard work and sacrifices made by the Godly influences of our Founding Fathers and the Lord being true to His Word, we are a nation that has been truly blessed and protected by God's mighty hand. The Lord put upon the hearts of our Founding Fathers to be a nation that gives people freedom. Our Founding Fathers' faith in God and His Word laid the original foundation which was girded with a reverent fear of the Lord.

Let the Holy Spirit of Christ probe your heart with these questions. Does your life express praise to the Lord for His sovereign control over this nation? Are you thanking

the Lord for statesmen who were hungry for the righteousness of the Lord and faithful to do all they could to lay a solid foundation for this nation based on the truths of God's Word? Do you express your love for the Lord by walking in accordance with the Word of God as King David and Solomon did?

**Transitional Sentence:** *Freedom in a nation that proclaims worship to God and Christ begins with a life expressing praise for the freedoms He has already established.* True freedom is responsible Christian living involving a new enslavement. Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." (John 8:34) Galatians 5:13-15 says, "You, my brothers were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature..."

A stanza from a hymn I read today says, "Our father's God, to thee, Author of liberty, to thee we sing." The King James Bible instructs Christians with, "not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." (1 Peter 2:16)

"Liberty" has to do with being set free from bondage of some kind. It is like an individual who has been imprisoned for many years and upon release needs to be able to use their liberty to serve others. (Dr. David Mains) "Liberty" (*eleuthería*) is the blessing of the Lord's grace... enabling [the child of God to break away] from the dominion of sinful appetites and unholy passions..." as the Lord changes the sinner's heart attitude in regard to the written Word of God. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament; James 1:25) In mankind's original state apart from the Lord, he is in bondage to corruption.

The same stanza in the hymn I quoted today not only gives God credit for being the Author of liberty, but also makes a plea to God, "long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light; protect us by thy might, great God, our king!" The same Jesus who warns about the bondage of sin and the dangers of living in sin, shares the only sure solution to setting the people of America free and giving them liberty, He said, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36)

The fact is Jesus is the answer to the Holy Spirit instructions given through the Apostle Paul, "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness." (Romans 6:13)

It all begins with a true faith in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26 says, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." "Faith" (*pístis*) is the conviction of the truth that the price Jesus paid on the Cross paved the way for your sins to be forgiven and sets you in a right relationship with God. This faith in Christ gives repentant sinners a confidence in the assurance that Christ got victory over sin and death.

The Holy Spirit moved the Apostle Paul to write in great detail about the new enslavement, “Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. ...Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:16-23)

Grace that comes from God to the repentant sinner is not a license to continue to sin, therefore, it is not to be used as fire insurance to save people from the gates of hell even though they choose to stay enslaved to sin.

Through Romans 6:16-23 the Lord wants you to:

1.) Learn Something - born again Christians shall not be dominated by sin. Every day the Christian has the authority to pray, “Lord, ‘Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.’” (Psalm 119:133) There are only two choices on the shelf, become a slave to sin by not prayerfully reading and meditating upon the Word of God or become a slave to righteousness in Christ by prayerfully meditating upon and obeying the written Word of God.

2.) Know Something – you can only serve one master. Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” (Luke 16:13 NAS) “Wealth,” (*mammonas*) here is placing your value on what you own, making your life's vision to gain possessions and/or fame. It is the worship of materialism. (Complete Word Study of the New Testament)

3.) Remember Something – Christians can only “Proclaim Freedom in Christ” when they live like they remember their decision to accept the ultimate price paid for their sin and that they have invited Jesus to be both Savior and Lord of their lives. Romans 12:1-2 says, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--His good, pleasing and perfect will.”

4.) Do Something – serve the Lord with the same enthusiasm and fervor that you served sin. When I was without Christ I could work for my dad pitching hay bales, go to my work at the State Hospital and stay out late into the night drinking and tasting the false sweetness of sin. Jesus said the most important commandment is to, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30) This strong exhortation has as much effect on the Holy Spirit filled Christian today as it did Paul when he observed the strict diet and rigorous

bodily discipline of the athletes who prepared for the athletic games in Corinth. The Jewish people and Gentiles took notice of Paul's discipline to prayer, study of Scripture, faithfulness in trials in the Lord's work and steadfastness through persecutions because of his faith in Christ.

Lastly, Romans 6 tells you to "Consider Something" – the wages of sin, eternal death vs. the gift of God, eternal life. In Romans 8:6 we read, "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the [Holy] Spirit is life and peace." At the very moment life is conceived an eternal soul is created. The fact is everyone will live forever, in hell or in the very presence of God, Christ and all who enslaved themselves in service to the King of kings. There will be a day when every knee will bow before Jesus Christ. Why not do it on this side and enjoy the benefits of the freedom or liberties that come with having God as your eternal Father and Jesus Christ as your eternal Savior and Friend who sticks closer than a brother so you can enjoy the Holy Spirit as your Comforter, Guide and Helper.

**In Closing:** *Proclaiming freedom in Christ before those who live in the United States of America requires Christians to live responsibly before God and the eyes of mankind.* It begins with proclaiming and enjoying the liberties God has given us through our "Founding Fathers" and by changing our enslavement from being in bondage to sin to becoming Bond Servants to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The most intriguing story I ever heard about one of our greatest presidents was told by Dr. Adrian Rogers about the sacrifice made by President Abraham Lincoln. While attending a slave auction, President Abraham Lincoln took notice of a beautiful black lady who was standing upon the auction block. Men were bidding aggressively hoping to purchase this beautiful woman. Lincoln was convinced that the men were not interested in anything but making her their plaything, a person on whom they could indulge their lust.

According to Dr. Rogers, President Lincoln was able to purchase the woman, even though it was not her will to be purchased and owned by anyone. After laying down the price, President Lincoln took the lady aside and told her she was now free to go, she would no longer be in slavery to man's abuses.

Instead of exercising her freedom to leave, in her freedom, she chose to stay with Mr. Lincoln and serve him freely. Even though she did not ask him to make this gesture, she stayed to show her thanks.

To all who are exposed to the truths of this message, the flesh, the world and the devil himself know that you are the apple for God's eye. They are bidding to indulge their lust upon you and wanting that lust to be expressed through you. God saw your beautiful soul upon that auction block and out of mercy and grace He paid the ultimate price, His Son on the Cross of Calvary, so you can be free to choose whom you want to be enslaved to. The Bible says Jesus came to seek and save the lost and set the captive free. (Luke 19:9; John 8:36; Romans 6:18) The choice to whom you enslave yourself to this very day is always yours for the making. You can choose to enslave yourself to sin which leads to eternal damnation or enslave yourself to Jesus Christ who gives eternal life and freedom over all bondage. You only need to come to Him by faith alone. Let us pray!