



Title: Proclaiming Freedom in Christ

Theme: Living Responsibly Before Christ and Men

“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.”

Hymn of Proclamation

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!”

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)

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?

Praise the Lord for the freedoms we enjoy

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.

Even if you do believe in Christianity or any other religious belief, there is no law stating you have to follow what is taught in that religion or get arrested. Freedom of religion is bedrock in this nation.

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?

True freedom is responsible Christian living involving a new enslavement

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.

When Jesus spoke truth, "...everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34) He was speaking to a group of people who were claiming to not have been slaves to anyone. They were finding their righteousness in the fact they were from the seed of Abraham and they said God was their Father. (John 8:33;39;41) These

Jews assumed they should have all the liberties or freedoms that come with being the children of God, through the blood lines that trace back to Abraham.

Jesus boldly showed them that they did not have the faith of Abraham because they did not do as Abraham did, and He exposed the truth that their real father was the Devil. (John 8:39-47)

Originally the Jews were meant to be a nation of people reflecting a life as being holy to the Lord. (Deuteronomy 26:16-19) They needed only to obey His commandments.

The people the Lord is speaking to in John 8 are like those the Apostle Paul wrote about in 2 Corinthians 3. When the Law of God was read a veil covered their hearts and it was there because only Christ can take the veil away. They were rejecting the claims of Christ, therefore the unbelieving Jews remained in their oppression of spiritual blindness. (2 Corinthians 3:13-16)

It must be noted, there is not one man on this earth who has not and cannot slip into sin. Therefore, whoever slips into sin is not a slave to sin. If this was so the Lord would have no servants. The Lord is not speaking to those who slip into sin here. (Matthew Henry Commentary: The Pulpit Commentary)

The type of people the Lord is referring to have spiritual hearts like the people of Jeremiah's time. God had given the Prophet Jeremiah a message to be spoken for the purpose of calling the people of God out of Idolatry. Listen to their response to His message, "We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the Name of the Lord! We will certainly do everything we said we would: Will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and will pour out drink offerings to her just as our fathers, our kings and our officials did in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. At that time we had plenty of food and [we] were well off and suffered no harm." (Jeremiah 44:16-17)

A depraved heart leads to an inability to understand God's spoken Word and this hard heart toward the Lord moves unrepentant mankind into idolatry. This causes people to say, "I will do it my way and I do not care what the Word of the Lord says. We are enjoying all that we have and we will worship the god we feel provides for our wants." Idolatry causes men and women to act as the people who lived in the time of the prophet Jeremiah and it is just as dangerous today.

Jesus warns not to let possessions and money be the guiding purpose in how you live. (Matthew 6:24) The Apostle Paul teaches that idolatry is not the first stage of religion, but the deliberate act of apostasy. When mankind chooses not to worship their Creator, the Lord surrenders them over to all forms of idolatry. When we consider the whole counsel of God's Word, we see that idolatry is widened to include anything that leads to the dethronement of the Lord from the spiritual heart of mankind. (International Dictionary of the Bible)

Idolatry in the heart of mankind has caused people in America to reject the whole counsel of God's Word and leave the original foundational truths which first governed the United States of America. Those the Lord is talking about actually make a covenant with sin, make a choice to sin and actually make provision for the flesh to participate in sin. Their brand of sin often becomes apparent because they make it their custom to give servitude to all who can and will publish and promote their sin.

Americans apart from a personal relationship with Christ will appoint politicians, judges and officials who make laws that give them liberties to indulge in their desired life style. They hire religious leaders who will tell them what the itching ears want to hear, thus bringing mockery to the house of God. They find doctors, specialists of all kinds and others of influence to bring credibility to their lifestyle.

Even in the height of their indulgence the people of America are in bondage. Broken homes, unplanned parenting, single mothers, drug abuse, crime, and unfulfilled dreams at the very least are robbing families of the full enjoyment that God had originally planned for the home.

The removal of God and Christ from our public schools has produced bitterness, unrest, unclear vision and wrong motives for achievement. Striving for wealth and fame has replaced the joy found in servant-hood.

In a country where there is more accessibility to different ways of learning and feeding oneself the Word of God, there is less knowledge of God's Word today than what our "Founding Fathers" had when this nation was established. Most of them had great knowledge and walked in healthy fear of the Lord. The bondage of self-fulfillment has replaced the hunger for God's righteousness and the holiness of Christ in too many churches. Any message pointing people to the whole counsel of God's Word is disregarded as much today as it ever was in the time of Jeremiah, Jesus, and the Apostle Paul.

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)

Through a relationship with Christ, Christians can by choice live out for all to see, "In God We Trust." 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.

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1) and born again Christians are no longer controlled by the sinful nature, but by the Holy Spirit of Christ because the Spirit of God lives in them. The very same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, lives in the spiritual heart of Christians, thus enabling them to put to death the misdeeds of the body. (Romans 8:1-13) Christians growing and maturing in their personal relationship with Christ actually cast away enslavement to sin and become slaves to Christ, hungry for the truths of God's Word.

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. The flesh, this world's view and the devil convince people that they have freedom to live as they like. Jesus pointed out this way of thinking was not true. The truth is that unrepentant sinners are in bondage – but in Christ repentant sinners are set free to choose to whom they want to be enslaved.

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) This prayer is found

in Psalm 119 which gives praise to God for His word and gives the only way of living pure in God's sight, by living according to the Word of God.

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) I remember when Arabian Horses were my god. They still are a god to many. I nailed horseshoes on horse's feet for the purpose of serving man's idols, for fame and for the hope of getting wealth. After becoming a Christian I learned stewardship. Then I enjoyed the liberty of trimming horse's feet and nailing horseshoes on because those horses belong to the Lord and I was taking care His possessions.

Know for a fact, people can choose slavery to the world's view or choose slavery to Christ by making time to learn Biblical stewardship.

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.”

Those who live in a nation with a motto, “In God We Trust” take notice of Christians who live sacrificially for the Lord because these illuminated Christians are able to find God's will for them and live it out. Those who live in America notice the huge difference between those who are truly born again and those who have only a form of godliness while denying the power of God.

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) By way of application the Holy Spirit moved the Apostle Paul to write, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners

run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

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.

The Lord, family members and those who live in this nation take notice of those with regular church attendance, those who trust in prayer, and those who make preparation through study of God’s Word. They notice those who are faithful in trials and hardships and they know to whom Christians are bond servants.

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.

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!

Visit our Free Website www.standatthecrossroads.com