

Freedom Is Not Free!

James 3:13 – 18, John 8:31 – 38, and Exodus 16:1 - 8

7/3/22

When WW I erupted in 1914, British statesman, Sir Edward Grey declared – ‘The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them again in our lifetime!’ Grey was right! When the war to end all wars finally ended some 20 million had been killed of which 10 million were civilians and another 21 million were injured.

While not on the same scale or magnitude, devastation can also occur in our personal lives. Our home, workplace, church, or neighborhood can also be shrouded by the dark specter of conflict. This is one of the reasons God calls us to be difference makers in the world.

In our scripture reading from the Book of James it says – ‘*The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure, then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit. This wisdom is impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.*’

The role of a peacemaker is significant because of its harvest. The word – *Righteousness* – means ‘right standing’ or ‘in right relationship’. Peacemakers can help restore relationships. It is no wonder that Jesus said – ‘*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God*’.

God’s children rely on God’s wisdom and they become instruments of God’s peace where it is needed most. Jesus’ children rely on Jesus’ teaching and wisdom and they become instruments of Christ’s peace where it is needed most. And boy do we needed peacemakers now!

So one this July 4th weekend, how can Jesus’ peace enable us to be known as peacemakers when people around us chose to fight?

In John 8:36 it says - *'If the Son of God sets you free, you will be free indeed!'*

Let us rejoice in our freedom to worship in spirit and in truth. Let us be filled with the power that we might be faithful and worthy of Jesus' great love.

Ask ten different people what freedom means to them and you will probably get ten different answers. Freedom is important to us in many different ways. As Christians we have freedom of worship, freedom to read the Bible, and freedom to call upon the name of the Lord in prayer. We are presently celebrating these freedoms this morning.

Freedom also means if we make a mistake, we have the freedom to do so. If we make the mistake of not using the freedom that we have blessed with, we might as well not have it. If we make the mistake of not using the freedom that we have blessed with, we might stand in danger of losing it.

When we fail to take advantage of this freedom, that is freedom to worship, freedom to read the Bible, and freedom to call upon the name of the Lord in prayer, we ignore the sacrifice of the Son of God who came to set us free from the penalty of sin. Remember - *'If the Son of God sets you free, you will be free indeed!'*

If we use these privileges like we should, we will know freedom from the power of sin to ruin our lives.

First, we must exercise our freedom to become dead to sin and alive in Christ. Now there is an exercise routine - dead to sin and alive in Christ. We have freedom. If the Son of God sets you free, you will be free indeed!

We have freedom from the bondage of sin in Jesus Christ. This freedom is the greatest freedom we will ever know. If the Son of God sets you free, you will be free indeed!

In our reading from Exodus, the Hebrew people were slaves in Egypt. Yahweh, their God had worked miracles to break their chains of slavery. And after years of abuse and despair, they were finally FREE!

The people, fresh from their breath taking rescue at the Red Sea, finally stop and rest. The adrenaline is rushing through their bodies but it will not be long before the people forget! This dramatic escape from Egypt will soon fade and they will look around them and see a desert. They will assess their situation and they will think that it was better in bondage in Egypt. They narrowly escaped a charging Egyptian army bent on revenge but they begin to wonder if they were better off back in Egypt. The people of Israel now think – now what?

This a familiar pattern for the people of Israel. Whatever made God think the people would be different? Whatever made Moses think the people could handle being free? Oh, they had suffered in Egypt but at least they had food to eat. And now what? No food and water and no end to their uncertain journey is in sight!

Their bodies were on the freedom side of the Red Sea, but their hearts were still in Egypt! They cried – ‘If only we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt. Oh, we sat by pots of meat and ate our fill of bread. Oh, we remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. Now what?’

Freedom sometimes comes in stages. Freedom carries with it a risk along the way. The road of freedom can lead to healing and wholeness but that road can be long! The journey to freedom can take time. The mental chains of imprisonment and abuse can be harder to break than the physical restraints. The body may be free, but the mind and spirit may be trapped in the past!

Let us conclude this message by viewing a movie clip from the film ‘Braveheart’. In this scene William Wallace is encouraging his fellow Scotsmen to fight with the larger and more powerful English Army. (Watch clip)

At the end of the clip you heard this phrase – ‘Alba Du Gra’ which means ‘Scotland Forever!’ Freedom is not free!

Let us pray:

Father, your Light penetrates the deepest darkness. Your peace calms the most troubled heart. Help us know your wisdom and peace and allow us to carry it to others in their struggles as well.

O God of freedom, help us to live in your truth today. Give us the courage to be free.

AMEN.

Let us now exercise this freedom that God gives us by coming to this table, the Lord’s Table. Let us take communion this morning as an act of freedom of worship and praise. Let us take communion this morning as an act of love for Jesus Christ for his sacrifice upon a cross.

If you believe that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, freely accept this offering of love.

We do this each and every Sunday because we are the Disciples of Christ

Our hymn of communion is – ‘Come, Share the Lord’ #408