

## “Living in Liberty”

C.R. 7-1-18

**Text:** Galatians 5:1-2, 13-15

**Intro:** I read a story this week of some calves that had spent the harsh mid-west winter in the barn and the corral just outside the barn. In Spring the farmer loved letting them out and watching how they reacted to the freedom they now had. They would run right up to the gate and stop. What was they supposed to do?

When our Founding Fathers decided to risk life and limb to begin this "grand experiment" called America they did not know a lot about what they "did" want. They knew a lot more about what they "didn't" want. They didn't want tyranny. They didn't want taxation without representation. They didn't want an absentee landlord from an ocean away running their lives and calling the shots. They wanted freedom.

No one said it better than a red-headed, fair-skinned follower of Christ from Virginia named Patrick Henry. On March 20, 1775 the 2nd Virginia Convention convened at Saint John's Church in Richmond, Virginia. They had gathered there to discuss how to deal with the tyranny and oppression of Great Britain and King George III.

On March 23rd, this 39-year-old Christian stood to his feet and uttered some words that would become the spark that would light the fires of freedom that have burned brightly now for over 240 years. He said, "Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it Almighty God - I know not what course others may take; but as for me - give me liberty or give me death!"

Today we are going to look at what it means to be Spiritually free. Let's take a closer look.

### 1) The Command (v.1)

- a. What a blessing it is to be free, and oh how sadly we take our freedom.
- b. The Message: Christ has set us free to live a free life. So, take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you.
- c. Explain the audience that Paul is writing to. They were saved, and the Judaizers were trying to add something to Jesus.
- d. Our founding Fathers did everything including giving their lives so that we could be set free from the slavery of Religion and its rituals, and the dictatorship of the church.
- e. **Illus.** Fifty-six men signed the Declaration of Independence. Their conviction resulted in untold sufferings for themselves and their families. Of the 56 men, five were captured by the British and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary Army. Another had two sons captured. Nine of the fifty-six fought and died from wounds or hardships of the war. Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships sunk by the British navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts and died in poverty. At the battle of Yorktown, the British General Cornwallis had taken over Thomas Nelson's home for his

headquarters. Nelson quietly ordered General George Washington to open fire on the Nelson home. The home was destroyed and Nelson died bankrupt. John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their thirteen children fled for their lives. His fields and mill were destroyed. For over a year, he lived in forest and caves, returning home only to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later, he died from exhaustion.

- f. The image of the yoke represents slavery, service and control by someone else over your life.
- g. The yoke of Christ frees us to fulfill His will, while the yoke of the law enslaves us. The unsaved person wears a yoke of sin, the religious legalist wears the yoke of bondage, but the Christian who depends on God's grace wears the liberating yoke of Christ.
- h. Christ free us and we must stand in that and add nothing to that. It is Christ and the finished work of the cross, and the glorious empty tomb.

## 2) The Warning. (v1 &13)

- a. **Legalism.** Legalism is treating that which is good as though it were essential.
- b. Whenever Christians turn something valuable into something ultimate, Legalism is at work and freedom is forfeited.
- c. We must be careful to understand that the law cannot save. We know this, but for some reason we can't help but continue to think this way.
- d. For Paul it was the battle over circumcision. For us it is many other battles.
- e. **Kent Hughes:** "Many Christians come from legalistic backgrounds. They grew up in churches where it seemed like almost everything was ultimately important-except that which in fact was. They recall painful congregational meetings where individuals seemed just as incensed about a change in the music ministry or the color of the carpet in the fellowship hall as they did about the adulterous affair of a minister or the pastor's tendency to soft-pedal substitutionary atonement. These are toxic places to be."
- f. If we are not careful we take non-essentials and make them essential. (Ex. Preacher checking Bibles, and measuring skirts, the woman who said I didn't see any pants in here)
- g. We lose sight of what ultimately counts, and we begin to insist that good things are in fact necessary. And the result is that we look with pity or suspicion on anyone who would think or do otherwise.
- h. A lot of what we think is not in itself bad, but it is not essential to salvation.
- i. **Junior Hill:** "Legalism robs you of the joy that is found in Jesus." "Legalism is me being more interested in you being like me, instead of you being like Christ".
- j. We must understand that I am free not to do as I wish, but free to live the righteous Christ life with the sweet Holy Spirit as my guide. Free from shame and guilt because it has been paid for. Free from thinking it something I have to do, but it is something I get to do.
- k. **Illust:** With woman and mean husband. He died and she remarried a man good to her. I don't have to I get to.

- l. Liberalism is dangerous as well. Look at v.13. Our freedom does not mean we can just live like anything either.
- m. God is holy, and we must be holy. His commands are to be followed, not thrown out. He means just what he says.
- n. God's grace is not a license to sin. If we think that we have a heart condition.

### 3) The Evidence (v. 14-15)

- a. We must not allow the yoke of Legalism to rule, nor should we allow the seed of liberalism to sprout.
- b. Paul teaches us that there is evidence that the Christ life is being lived. We don't make non-essentials essentials, and we don't take scripture and throw it out the window. We love.
- c. We can tell the truth in love.
- d. We must be a church and Christians that look people in the eye and love them, but that does not mean we have to agree with their life choice.
- e. Example: Young girl gets pregnant out of wedlock. What do we do? How do we react? We don't celebrate the sin, but we do love the girl and the baby, and we help them.
- f. Example: Couple living together but want to get married? What do we do? We ask them to repent, separate, go through counselling and unite in a God honoring way. But we don't hurt them. We love them.
- g. We cannot reach people for Christ by being mean, nor can we reach them by not telling them the truth. Look at the woman at the well. How did Jesus handle her?
- h. We must win them to Christ, he will fix what is wrong.
- i. The inner discipline of God is far better than the outer discipline of man-made rules.
- j. **The Inscription on the Statue of Liberty, written by Emma Lazarus**  
Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me; I lift my lamp beside the golden door.
- k. We must make sure that we stand fast in our liberty. We must not become legalistic and allow non-essentials to become essentials. Nor should we to the opposite way and only pick and chose the passages that we like. We must love as Christ loved, and live as Christ lived.