

The Price of Freedom

On Tuesday of last week our nation celebrated its 241st anniversary of the signing of the famous Declaration of Independence which took place on July 4, 1776. Also on Tuesday of last week North Korea fired an intercontinental missile which, if flying straight, reportedly would have been capable of reaching Alaska. Thus, on the very day in which our nation was celebrating its freedom, the world was once again reminded of how fragile freedom really is, and how it can be destroyed in a moment's notice.

Political freedom is not free. Travel to Washington DC and take a trip to nearby Arlington National Cemetery, which contains the remains of over 400,000 people from the U.S., and eleven other countries. It also contains the remains of nearly 5,000 unknown soldiers. Ponder the gleaming white crosses which grace that cemetery, and you will be painfully reminded of the sobering fact that political freedom is not free. Ask any parent who has lost a son or daughter while fighting for their country, and re-discover the enormous price of freedom. Ask any widow, or widower, who has lost a mate in war and be reminded of the price they are paying every day for the privilege of living in a free society! Visit with any person who has lost an eye, an arm, a leg, etc., while fighting for their country, and try to imagine the price they have paid, and will continue to pay, for freedom. Indeed, freedom is not free!

I am thankful that our “founding father's” were interested in freedom. I am thankful for the Constitution of the U.S., which was framed in order to protect those basic, invaluable freedoms, such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, etc. I am impressed by the words in the Preamble to the Constitution which says: “We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure **the blessings of liberty** to ourselves and to our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” I am thankful for such men as Patrick Henry who stood before the Virginia Provincial Convention in 1775, and boldly said “give me liberty or give me death.” I am thankful for those men who signed the Declaration of Independence, who in so doing pledged “their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor,” and whose later sacrifices proved the sincerity of their pledge. And I must confess to a certain amount of righteous indignation when I hear the words and view the conduct of countless moderns who, if they have their ungodly way, will turn our nation into an immoral garbage dump where “anything goes” — except the freedom to mention the name of “God” in the classroom, or the right to proclaim God's word on such things as same-sex marriage, homosexuality, transgenderism, abortion, etc. It is a matter of grave concern that at this very moment when our nation is “armed to the teeth” to protect us from foreign invaders, there are multitudes of influential people who are doing everything within their power to destroy our freedoms **from within!**

However, aside from my “soap box” moralizing about what so many in our nation are doing which (if allowed to continue unopposed) will destroy our nation from within, the fact remains that freedom (political freedom) is not free. Every war our nation has fought from the Revolutionary War to present efforts to curtail the horrible effects of ISIS serves as mute evidence of the great cost involved in both attaining and maintaining freedom. Indeed, as we have repeatedly stated, freedom is not free! However, in the balance of this article we shall focus

upon a freedom far more valuable than political freedom. Specifically, we now ponder the value, and cost, of:

Spiritual Freedom!

Long before anyone ever heard of our “founding fathers,” Jesus Christ came to this earth to make spiritual freedom available for every person. Please note these verses: “*And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,*” John 8:32. “*Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed,*” John 8:36. “*But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness,*” Rom. 6:17-18. “*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death,*” Rom. 8:2. “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage,*” Gal. 5:1.

But what is freedom? Freedom, the noun, is translated from *eleutheria*, which literally means “manumission from slavery,” Vine. Specifically, we are referring to the slavery of **sin**! Man was created and given dominion over the beast of the earth, the birds of the air, etc., Gen. 1:26-28, but all too often has allowed **sin** to reign over him. Regarding this point, note Prov. 5:22: “*His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin.*” The Psalmist petitioned God, saying, “*Direct my steps by your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me,*” Psalm. 119:133. Countless multitudes are addicted to (enslaved by) such things as pornography, greed and covetousness, drugs (both legal and illegal), illicit sex, gambling, alcohol, behavioral issues, etc.

“**Free**,” the verb, is translated from *eleutheroos*, and it means “to make free” from the law of Moses, Gal. 5:1, the bondage of corruption, Rom. 8:21, and freedom from sin, John 8:32,36; Rom. 6:18,22. In this article we are primarily focused on **freedom from sin**! Sin is the world’s cruelest taskmaster! And, sadly, no one is exempt! The Bible plainly states that “*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*” Rom. 3:23, and that “*the wages of sin is death...*,” Rom. 6:23.

However, Jesus Christ came to this earth in order to free us from the yoke and bondage of sin, from the servitude of the devil. And only Jesus can provide us with that freedom. It is a fact, “*if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed,*” John 8:36. “**Free indeed**” is what it is all about. But this freedom was purchased at a price, the extent of which is beyond our ability to comprehend! You see, in order for freedom from sin to be possible, a price had to be paid which would be sufficient to atone for our sins. Cf. Rom. 3:24-25. Jesus, “*by the grace of God,*” tasted “*death for everyone,*” Heb. 2:9. “*For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,*” Rom. 5:6. “*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us,*” Rom. 5:8.

The freedom made possible by the atoning death of Jesus is available for all, but, tragically, it is **not enjoyed** by all! You see the gospel, which is “*the power of God unto salvation,*” Rom. 1:16, must be obeyed, 2 Thess. 1:6-9. Obedience unto the gospel involves faith, repentance, confession of faith, and baptism “*into Christ,*” and “*for the remission of sins,*” followed by faithfulness to God and living godly lives. Mark 16:16; Acts 17:30, Rom. 10:9-10, Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:4; Rev. 2:10, etc. Upon scriptural obedience unto the gospel of Christ, one becomes a part of the “*saved*” whom God adds to His church, Acts 2:47, which is the “*body*” of Christ, Eph. 1:22-23, and in which one is reconciled unto God, Eph. 2:16. Sadly, however, multitudes refuse to obey the saving gospel of Christ, and thus remain lost, undone, slaves of sin, and destined for that “*everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,*” Matt. 25:41. For such people spiritual freedom is available, but by their own choice they remain slaves

of sin and servants of Satan! How sad! How eternally tragic!

True freedom in Christ gives one freedom from the agonizing burden of sin, Acts 2:38, freedom from “*the fear of death*,” Heb. 2:14-15, freedom to enjoy “*all spiritual blessings*” in Christ, Eph. 1:3, and freedom to enjoy the “*hope of eternal life*,” Tit. 1:2. There is simply no way to over emphasize the importance of the freedom which only Christ can give! However, contrary to the thinking of so many, freedom from sin does not give one a license **to** sin; it is not freedom from responsibility; it is not freedom from restraint; it is not the freedom to “do as you please.” Freedom from restraint leads to anarchy, and slavery of the worst kind.

Conclusion: Freedom is not free! It cost God His Son, John 3:16. It cost Jesus His blood, Matt. 26:28. And it comes at a price on the part of the person who wants to be free; it means he must “*deny*” himself, and “*take up his cross and follow*” Jesus. Friend, if you are a slave to sin, turn to, and obey, Jesus. He can make you “*free indeed*.” —B. Witherington
