

Theme: Christ came to give us true freedom, the ability to be who we were created to be – the image of God, serving others in love.

I. Intro – A Culture of Freedom?

- A. A lot of talk in our culture about freedom
- B. This is probably the most prized value today
- C. But what is freedom?
- D. How has Christ set us free?

II. Christ Has Come to Give Us Freedom

- A. It was for freedom Christ set us free (1,13)
 - 1. This is the very nature of His work for us
 - 2. This is the very nature of our salvation
 - 3. Luke 4:18 – Freedom!
- B. The importance of freedom in this epistle
 - 1. Freedom vs. slavery in this section
 - 2. Freedom and slavery in previous sections
 - a. Galatians 3:22-25; 4:1-7; 4:8-9; 4:21-31
 - b. A key theme in this letter!

III. Christ Gives Us Freedom from Sin

- A. Freedom from the penalty of sin (vv1-12)

- 1. This has been the key point in the letter
- 2. This comes from justification by faith **alone**
- 3. Note the strong polemic (vv2-6)
- 4. To add **anything** to faith is to destroy Gospel
- B. Freedom from the power of sin (vv13-15)
 - 1. Then is it ok to sin? – **NO! – slavery!**
 - 2. Freedom NOT a base of operations for sin (v13)
 - 3. The indicative & imperative – be who you are!
 - 4. This will dominate rest of letter

IV. The True Nature of Freedom

- A. False ideas of freedom – then and now
 - 1. Greek - man master of his own decisions
 - 2. French – able to do anything that does not harm others
 - 3. Freedom – unfettered choice – Ken Myers
- B. The true nature of freedom
 - 1. It is a freedom from sin (v13; 1 Peter 2:16)
 - a. Sin is slavery (John 8:34; Rom 6:15-20)
 - b. Christ came to set us free from this (Jn 8:34-36)

Our Freedom in Christ

Galatians 5:1-15

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Communion

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

2. It is a freedom to fulfill our destiny
 - a. True to essential nature – DB Hart quote
 - b. Reflect God's character – Eph 4:19-24
 - c. Slaves to righteousness – Rom 6:15-20
3. It is a freedom to serve others in love
 - a. Freedom to **serve** others in love (v13)
 - b. This is what law tried to do (v14)
 - c. This is natural outgrowth of faith (v6)

V. Conclusion & Summary

- A. Have you bought the false notion of freedom?
 1. Have you thought of freedom as unfettered choice?
 2. Have you thought of freedom in terms of rights rather than duties?
 3. Have you thought of freedom as self-indulgence?
- B. How are you exercising freedom?
 1. Are you receiving Christ's work – or adding your own?
 2. Are you living as a slave to sin?
 3. Are you being what you were made to be?
 4. Are you serving others in love? – HOW?

18 The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. **He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners** and recovery of sight for the blind, **to release the oppressed,** Luke 4:18

✓ Man as the master of his own decisions
One common Greek view of Freedom – opposed to slavery

✓ “Liberty consists in being able to do anything that does not harm others.”
From Article 4 of “The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen

The common modern understanding of freedom begins by denying any ultimate ends for human well being beyond ‘choosing’ itself. Freedom in this modern view is freedom from any restrictions on choosing – including any restrictions derived from human nature, from the demands of justice, from the good that exists prior to the human will. Ken Myers

16 Live as free men, but do **not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil**; live as servants of God. 1 Peter 2:16

34 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.” John 8:34

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 **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?** 17 **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.** 18 **You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.** 19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. **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.** 20 **When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.** Romans 6:15-20

19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. 20 You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. 21 Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and **to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.** Ephesians 4:19-24

It has become something of a commonplace among scholars to note that—from at least the time of Plato through the high Middle Ages—the Western understanding of human freedom was inseparable from an understanding of human nature: to be free was to be able to flourish as the kind of being one was... To choose awry, then—through ignorance or maleficence or corrupt longing—was not considered a manifestation of freedom, but of slavery to the imperfect, the deficient, the privative, the (literally) subhuman. Liberty of choice was only the possibility of freedom, not its realization...

David B Hart

“The Pornography Culture” in *The New Atlantis* (Summer 2004)

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