

True Freedom - November 22

Today I want to talk on the subject of Liberty. What is true freedom? In Galatians 5:13, Paul tells us that we have been called to liberty. But he warns us not to use liberty for the flesh, for evil.

In New York City, there is a huge statue of liberty. I wish I could put the scripture verse on this Great monument.

“You have been called to freedom, but do not use your freedom for evil.” America has been given much freedom, but it has been terribly abused.

**Oh I'm free to kill my baby if I don't want him.
I'm a man, but I want to be a woman, I'm a woman, but I want to be a man.
Men marrying man, and women marrying women.
Illegals can come into the country, and receive government support.
It's perfectly alright to lie and to cheat, to get what I want.**

**Satan has perverted the issue of freedom.
Whatever leads to true freedom, Satan calls bondage.
Whatever leads to bondage, Satan calls freedom. For example:**

**Don't fence me in, don't put any restrictions on me.
“I want to do what I want to do, don't tell me anything else.”
It's my life and I'll do what I want. Follow your heart, do what you want.
These attitudes lead to terrible bondage. And Satan calls these freedom.
Satan's whole desire is to control us, and bring us in the bondage.
To accomplish this, he scorns God's laws, the checks God puts upon us.**

**God's laws actually bring true freedom, but Satan mocks God's laws.
Why are people in prison? They violated: do not steal, do not kill,
Do not commit adultery, do not lie. Honor your father and mother.
God's laws bring freedom, but Satan wants to corrupt and control us.**

Many young people resent house rules and being under authority.

“I want my freedom. Don't tell me what to do.”

So they go out and get entangled in the real bondages. —

Moral sin, fornication, then abortion, followed by guilt and regret, bitterness, terrible debt, drugs, and alcohol.

This is not freedom, but horrible bondages, being controlled by Satan. But Satan called it freedom. It's my life and I'll do what I want.

God's laws bring life! They're not legalism or bondage. His commandments are not grievous (1 Jn. 5:3), but guide posts that keep us from falling into many sorrows. Freedom is the state of being free in spirit, mind, and soul.

True freedom is when sin does not have dominion over us, and vices, habits, and Satan are not controlling our lives.

Freedom is having a good conscience. It is abounding with love, joy, peace, and all of the fruits of the Spirit.

We can be marvelously free, though confined with difficult circumstances, Or roaming about with no restraints, but enslaved in controlled by Satan.

The apostle Paul, though confined in prison - had joy and peace. And he had a good conscience, had no guilt, but God's wonderful presence.

While in prison, Paul said: Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Php 4:4* Paul had true freedom, even though confined in prison.

He also stated while he was in prison: Phil. 4:6-7:

“Be [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which [sur]passeth all understanding, shall [guard] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” He has great peace and freedom in prison.

Maturity and wisdom are needed to properly handle freedom

Mankind is simply unable to handle unlimited freedom.

Let's go back to the beginning of human race. When our first parents transgressed in Eden, God had no option but to quickly impose limits upon them because of a fallen nature they received by listening to the serpent. God had to pronounce: "Cursed is the ground *for thy sake*" (Gen. 3:17b). This was not Gods anger, but his love and mercy.

The curse involves hard work, sweat, pain, thorns, and other difficulties. Remember the apostle Paul had a thorn in his life to keep him humble. This was God's love, to keep him from pride and arrogance.

Without restraints, a fallen nature would run wild. Therefore, God pronounced: "Cursed is the ground *for thy sake*" (Gen. 3:17b). Limitations that are imposed upon us by the curse are actually for our benefit, though often this truth is not appreciated. God-given restraints are the mercy of God to keep us on course.

Dangers of total freedom

I want to relate a story that is quite vivid to me, to make my point very clear. You might remember a great woman of God named Kathryn Kuhlman. She had a great healing ministry. Over 5 million people... blessed... healed. I remember when she died in February 1976.

Her life story was written in a book called - Daughter of Destiny. The author wanted to include a particular story but she didn't want in there. Later she changed her mind, and allowed this story to be included.

A woman totally healed, who quickly went astray

Now, before I tell this story, I want to make it very clear that God loves to bless, and heal, and prosper his people. But are we ready for our miracle?

**Many people, when they are blessed, Forget God, no longer rely on him.
Prosperity and freedom often cause people to forget God.
And This is a great problem in America.**

**Coming back now to the account Kathryn Kuhlman's Life story.
There was a young woman who had a terrible disease.
She could no longer walk, or hardly even move. She was invalid.
She was brought to a healing service in Carnegie Hall.
She was wheeled in the stretcher, she had no hope in the natural.**

**While she was in the service laying in a stretcher, God totally healed her.
And I believe God is going to many of these miracles in these days.
How wonderful to see an invalid with no hope, totally healed.
But what did she do you with her new healed body, and her freedom?**

**The first thing she did was divorce her husband,
And start having affairs with other men.
This is what she used her new freedom for.
She was using her liberty for the flesh.
We are called to liberty, not to use our liberty for the flesh. Gal.5:13**

**Remember the impotent man in John 5:5-14:
He had been paralyzed for 38 years. Instantly he was made whole.
What did Jesus say to this healed man. Go and sin no more.
Do not use your freedom, your liberty, for the flesh. Look at John 5:14:**

“Afterward Jesus finds him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”

**There is a great responsibility it comes with Liberty, freedom.
We need to be very wise when we have freedom.**

Luke 17:11-19 is the amazing account of the healing of 10 lepers, all ten were healed but only *one* returned to give glory to the Lord. All of these lepers were delighted to be healed yet only *one* used his healthy body to glorify the Lord. Nine of these men went their own way to use their miracle for their own interests. Remember, we are set free to serve *Him*.

I am saying these things for a very important reason.

God is going to pour out his Spirit upon all flesh in these last days. There will be tremendous signs and wonders, and marvelous healings. The question is: what will a person do with their new freedom?

Will they use this blessing and liberty for God, or to go their own way?

So when revival comes, we need to carefully warn people:

God healed you and blessed you, so that you could serve him.

When Moses was sent to Pharaoh, this was his message.

“Set my people free, *that they may serve ME*” (Exod. 4:23).

For what purpose does God deliver His people from bondages?

The answer is very clear from this passage in Exodus. He sets His people free so that they may be able to serve and glorify *Him joyfully!* Unfortunately, when God gives men and women their miracle of deliverance, instead of serving Him they often serve *themselves*.

This is precisely what Israel did after God delivered them from Egyptian bondage. Israel did not serve the Lord, but themselves. They used their freedom to go their own way.

If God restores health to us, what will we use our healthy body for? Will it be used for moral impurity? If God blesses us financially, will it draw us closer to Him, or will prosperity make us lose our dependency upon God? (Jer. 22:21).

“I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear.”

Story of the elder who got a new truck

A number of years ago, an elder in an African church prayed for a new red pickup truck. He lived far from town. Well, he got his new truck...

So, he did not show up for the Sunday service or the midweek service. He was too busy driving people to and from town. They never saw him again.

His life was absorbed with driving his truck *and making money*. Material blessing caused him to forget God (Deut. 6:10-12). This is a temptation not only in Africa, but everywhere in the world. Not everyone can handle financial blessing. Let's read Deuteronomy 6:10-12:

“And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” Deuteronomy 6:10-12, KJV.

Freedom and prosperity can cause people to forget the Lord.

This is a major problem in America.

We have used liberty for the flesh.

This is the reason God allows certain difficulties in our lives. His love.

To help keep us on course. Remember, Paul needs a thorn in his life.

If God removed all our problems, we would go off course.

Cursed is the ground for your sake. But God can turn curses into blessings.

Today's prosperity churches teach us, God wants us free from all problems.

People love that message, but it's dangerous to be free of problems.

The purpose for difficulties is to develop divine nature within us. And it is to do any eternal work in us, to conform us to the image of Christ.

Revelation 7:13-14 - these are they will come out of the great tribulation and wash their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb.

God does not always free us immediately from all of our difficult circumstances. He knows we are unable to handle total freedom all at once.

The God of all wisdom places over us “tutors and governors” until the appointed time (Gal. 4:1-2). These “tutors and governors” are people and circumstances in our lives that develop divine nature in us.

Therefore, hard work, being accountable to others; being *locked* into marriage; being tied down to a job; having our plans thwarted and our wills crossed at times, are all situations that God uses to develop us.

Confinements are *not* always bondages as Satan insists. Rather, they are a safeguard for us and they are working within us Christian character. Thus, when these restrictions are all cast off, people fall into the *real* bondages.

Long-standing problems in our lives (a physical ailment, other annoying situations are permitted by God more than we think. There are important reasons God leaves irritations in our lives for a season.

They are actually keeping us on course and forming within us eternal kingly qualities. God will remove these troubles one by one as we mature and are able to use freedom without freedom being our ruin. God will deal with our enemy or problem as we grow in grace and as the pertinent issues in our lives are faced head on (Prov.16:7, 2 Cor.10:6).

- I well remember a young lady who was a fabulous musician in one of the Bible schools where I was a resident teacher. Often when she played the piano our hearts were touched with a special anointing. On one occasion she mentioned to me her inconvenience of being without a car.
- She said that a local mechanic had been negligent for a whole year in replacing her damaged engine. This prompted me to speak to the mechanic who quickly complied and installed another motor. But there was something that I did not know at the time. God had purposely taken away this girl's car and her freedom for a very important reason. God had been trying to speak to her and save her from disaster. As soon as her freedom was restored, she used her liberty for an occasion to the flesh— she went out and broke up another man's marriage. The example I am using here is all too common.

In Summary

True freedom is when sin does not have dominion over us, when vices, habits, and Satan are not ruling our lives. Freedom is having a good conscience. It is abounding with love, joy, peace, and all of the fruits of the Spirit.

We can be marvelously free though confined with difficult circumstances, and we can be enslaved and controlled by Satan though roaming about with no restraints. God is doing everything He can to keep us out of the real bondages. Do not choose the *counterfeit* liberty.

Without restraints a sinful nature would run wild and all of us would become hopelessly degenerate (Eccl. 8:11). Therefore, God pronounced: “Cursed is the ground *for thy sake*” (Gen. 3:17b). Limitations that are imposed upon us by the curse are actually for our benefit, though often this truth is not appreciated. God-given restraints are the mercy of God to keep us on course. Yet, when a “thorn” in our life has served its purpose, God will remove it. When God sees that we are mature enough to manage freedom, He will deliver us from our prison-like circumstances. But if release is granted prematurely, liberty would be used as Paul warns, “for an occasion to the flesh.”

Therefore, God chooses not to free us immediately from all of our difficult circumstances. He knows we are unable to handle total freedom all at once. He only promises to drive out our enemies and problems “little by little” (Exod. 23:30, Deut. 7:22). The God of all wisdom places over us “tutors and governors” until the appointed time (Gal. 4:1-2). These “tutors and governors” are the people and circumstances in our lives that teach, restrain, and hedge us in for a while. Therefore, hard work, having to be accountable to others; being *locked* into marriage; being tied down to a job; having our plans thwarted and our wills crossed are all situations that are good for us. Confinements are *not* bondages as Satan insists. Rather, they are a safeguard for us and they are working within us Christian character. Thus, when these restrictions are cast off, people fall into the *real* bondages.

Satan's whole desire is to control and bring us into bondage. To accomplish this he undermines the checks God places upon man. Whatever leads to freedom Satan calls *bondage*; and whatever leads to bondage he calls *freedom*. Satan promotes independent and defiant attitudes like this: “Don't fence me in ... do not put any restrictions on me ... It's my life and I will do what I want.” Today there are many liberation movements.

Long-standing problems in our lives (a physical ailment, a bondage, other annoying situations at home, etc.) are permitted by God more than we think. There are important reasons God leaves irritations in our lives for a season. They are actually keeping us on course and forming within us eternal kingly qualities. God will remove these troubles one by one as we mature and are able to use freedom without freedom being our ruin. God will deal with our enemy or problem as we grow in grace and as the pertinent issues in our lives are faced head on (Prov.16:7, 2 Cor. 10:6).

I have learned that spiritual *prisons* are the mercy of God and can literally be our salvation. Noah's ark, for example, was a prison. The people in the ark could not go anywhere for a year and it was very unpleasant; yet that prison was their salvation. Sometimes God draws us into awkward circumstances but it is to save and deliver us. When I was a young man the Lord passed me through a long “tunnel experience” in my personal life. I was confused, depressed, and physically impaired for a number of years, but all of these became unspeakable treasures to me. Tunnels are very dark and lonely but they have several tremendous advantages. A tunnel is the shortest way through a “mountain” in our life. Also, *we cannot go off course*

when we are in a tunnel, and God always has light at the end of our tunnel and gives us an expected end (Jer. 29:11).

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In Scripture, *captivity* represents confinement. It is exile into strange and difficult circumstances. For Israel, it meant going to Babylon in chains of bondage in order to be purged from vanity and idolatry. Yet God promised them a return to their homeland and to normalcy. He sent them into captivity “for their good”, to “give them a heart to know him” (Jer. 24:5-7; cf. Job 42:10). This is the whole purpose of captivity. Captivity is an experience; it is a necessary ingredient for being conformed to the image of the Son of God. In Jeremiah's time, the prophet commanded them to submit to captivity (Jer. 27:12-14). In captivity we are freed from the shackles that vex our souls.

Some seminar lecturers have urged young people to stay at home with their parents (if possible) until they are married. Repeatedly we have seen young adults fall into the snare of fornication because they insist on having their *freedom* and living away from home. While resenting house rules and being under authority they have fallen into the *real* bondages — moral sin, abortion, guilt, regret, bitterness, debt, drugs, and alcohol. God's laws bring life! They are not legalism or bondage. His commandments are not grievous (1 Jn. 5:3), but guide posts that keep us from falling into many sorrows. Freedom is the state of being free in spirit, mind, and soul.

True freedom is when sin does not have dominion over us, and vices, habits, and Satan are not ruling our lives. Freedom is having a good conscience. It is abounding with love, joy, peace, and all of the fruits of the Spirit. We can be marvelously free though confined with difficult circumstances, and we can be enslaved and controlled by Satan though roaming about with no restraints. God is doing everything He can to keep us out of the real bondages. Do not choose the *counterfeit* liberty.

For What Will We Use Our Freedom?

“Let my son go, that he may serve me” Exodus 4:23

Many of us have heart cries and desires, some for which we have petitioned God for years. I would like to ask you a question: If God were to give you your request right now, would it help or hinder your walk with Him? If God gave you your miracle

today would it draw you closer to Him or would it take you away from Him? Are you ready for your desired miracle or would that miracle destroy you and cause you to go your own way? Let us consider the following illustrations:

- Moses said to Pharaoh, “Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, *that he may serve ME*” (Exod. 4:22-23). For what purpose does God deliver His people from bondages? The answer is very clear from this passage in Exodus. He sets His people free so that they may be able to serve and glorify *Him!* Unfortunately, when God gives men and women their miracle of deliverance, instead of serving Him they often serve *themselves*. This is precisely what Israel did after God delivered them from Egyptian bondage. Israel did not serve the Lord, but themselves. They used their freedom to go their own way.

- If God restores health to you, for what will you use your healthy body? Will it be used for fornication or adultery? If God blesses you financially, will it draw you closer to Him or will prosperity make you lose your dependency upon God? (Jer. 22:21). Several years ago, an elder in an African church prayed for a new red pickup truck. When he got his new truck, he did not show up for the Sunday service or the midweek service. He was too busy driving people to and from town. They never saw him again. His life was absorbed with driving his truck *and making money*. Material blessing caused him to forget God (Deut. 6:11,12). This is a temptation not only in Africa, but everywhere in the world. Not everyone can handle financial blessing.

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- Luke 17:11-19 is the amazing account of the healing of ten lepers. The Lord healed all ten but only *one* returned to give glory to the Lord. All ten of these lepers were delighted to be healed yet only *one* used his healthy body to glorify the Lord. Nine of these men went their own way to use their miracle for their own interests (see Phil. 2:21). Remember, we are set free to serve *Him*.

When Dr. Brian J. Bailey was in France many years ago, he and his wife witnessed and performed many miracles of healing. Their church was located near a notable hospital that treated terminally ill patients. When doctors had no hope for patients, they referred them to the church across the street that advertised: “Jesus Saves,

Jesus Heals.” As a last resort, terminally ill patients came to church and God miraculously healed many of them. Yet the interesting thing is this: most of them never returned to church or lived for God after their miracle of healing. Perhaps God is waiting for a deeper commitment from you before He heals you!

- The Lord cut off all of King David's enemies and elevated him to a position of greatness in the earth, according to 2 Samuel 7:9. Normally we would think, “What a blissful state not to have any more problems or enemies.” But, in reality, this is a time of *great danger!* After the Lord had cut off all of David's enemies, he soon grew lax and fell into sin with Bath-sheba (2 Sam.11-12). For this very reason God is slow to remove all of our problems. This is also the reason God left a thorn in Paul's life, otherwise he would have been “exalted above measure” (see 2 Cor. 12:7-10).

- I well remember a young lady who was a fabulous musician in one of the Bible schools where I was a resident teacher. Often when she played the piano our hearts were touched with a special anointing. On one occasion she mentioned to me her inconvenience of being without a car. She said that a local mechanic had been negligent for a whole year in replacing her damaged engine. This prompted me to speak to the mechanic who quickly complied and installed another motor. But there was something that I did not know at the time. God had purposely taken away this girl's car and her freedom for a very important reason. God had been trying to speak to her and save her from disaster. As soon as her freedom was restored, she used her liberty for an occasion to the flesh—she went out and broke up another man's marriage. The example I am using here is all too common.

- For what will we use our liberty? What will we do when we receive our release from bondage? Samson used his freedom for an occasion to the flesh. What Samson would not learn in freedom, he had to learn in bondage (Jud.16:19-31). Our Lord taught that if our eye caused us to offend it would be better to lose that eye in order to be spared from hell fire. Samson had to lose both of his eyes to bring him to his senses, but it saved him from eternal loss (cf. Mt. 5:28,29; 18:9). When a nation sins grievously against the Lord, He gives them over to bondage, slavery, and the oppression of other nations (Psa.107:10-14). He does so for three reasons: 1.) to punish them; 2.) to restrain them; 3.) and to bring them to repentance (Psa. 90:3). God imposes a yoke on individuals and on whole nations to restrain them and

redeem them. When a nation or people gains their independence or throws off their yoke *prematurely*, an evil nature runs rampant and liberty is not used to serve God but *self*. Always observe whether “freedom” and “independence” has helped or hindered the spiritual condition of a person or a nation.

Therefore, we should thank God for our circumstances and irritations and trust Him to bring us out of our confinements when He knows it will bless and not destroy us. Let us ask God to *prepare us* for our miracle so that when it comes we will be ready for it and it will be used for His glory! Remember, a beautiful pearl is formed by years of prolonged irritation, not speedy deliverance.

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