Freedom in Christ

INTRODUCTION

A. We, as a nation, enjoy unparalleled freedoms.
   1. When other nations were ruled by tyrants, our Founding Fathers established a republican democracy.
   2. The Bill of Rights guarantees freedoms not generally granted in the late 18th century — the freedom to worship as one sees fit, the freedom to speak out against the government, the freedom to have a trial by jury of one's peers.
   3. This nation has defended her freedoms through the course of her history — from Lexington and Concord, to Gettysburg, to Iwo Jima, to the deserts of Afghanistan, men and women have bravely fought — and died - for the freedoms of others.

B. Although we enjoy unparalleled freedom as Americans, the freedom we find in Christ far surpasses our American freedoms.
   1. Jesus said that he could provide true freedom — "If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (Jn. 8:36).
      a. True freedom can come no other way, except through Jesus.
      b. Any freedom outside of Christ is just an illusion, because it's temporary.
         1) The freedoms of this nation — as precious as they are — could be taken away from us.
         2) Yet, the freedom we enjoy in Christ can never be taken away.
   2. This morning, we want to examine the freedom we have in Christ.

CHRIST MAKES US FREE FROM THE LAW

A. "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).
   1. The Galatian Christians were wanting to go back and keep parts of the Law of Moses — specifically the command to be circumcised.
   2. Paul says, "NO! Jesus has made you free from that law. Don 't you dare go back."

B. Those who lived under the Law were slaves to the Law.
   1. Paul affirms this fact.
      a. "But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by" (Rom. 7:6).
      b. "Do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1).
   2. Peter also affirmed the bondage of the Law — "Why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10).

C. Why were those who lived under the Law slaves to it?
   1. The Law could not justify (Gal. 3:10-12). The Law could not take a sinner and make him right before God.
   2. The Law could not justify because of the weakness of men — "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3).
   3. The law could not save, because no one could keep it perfectly.
      a. No one, regardless of how hard he tried, could keep every single command in the Law.
      b. Therefore, he stood condemned before God.

D. Jesus freed us from the Law.
   1. He freed us from the Law because faith in Christ can justify (Gal. 2:15-16). Proper faith in Christ can take one and cause him to stand right before God.
   2. Because of his perfection, Jesus can save.
      a. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself

without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:14).

b. God needed a perfect, spotless sacrifice to cleanse people from sin. That sacrifice was found in Jesus.

E. Lest we get the idea that the Law was a failure, we need to comprehend that the Law did perfectly what God intended it to do.

1. The Law served as a "disciplinarian" until Christ came (Gal. 3:24).
   a. The disciplinarians guarded boys to and from school — they made sure the boys made it to school safely and they made sure the boys made it safely home.
   b. The Law served as a disciplinarian to make sure that the people of Israel came into contact with Jesus.
   c. Therefore, as the disciplinarian, the Law prepared the way for Jesus.
      1) The prophets pointed to Jesus. Jesus himself affirmed this:
         a) "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Mt. 5:17).
         b) "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (Jn. 5:39).
      2) The Law told us that a Savior was needed. The Law made painfully obvious that a man could not earn his own salvation.
2. The Law taught us the horrors of sin.
   a. Paul affirms this:
      1) "What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19).
      2) "I would not have known sin except through the law. I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet'" (Rom. 7:7).
   b. In the Old Testament, we see that offerings had to be made for sin.
   c. In the Old Testament, we see that sin must be punished.
      1) Korah and those with him died for their rebellion (Num 16).
      2) Achan and his family died for his disobedience (Josh. 7).

CHRIST MAKES US FREE FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH

A. "Through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"' (Heb. 2:14-15).

B. Jesus destroyed the one who had the power over death.

1. "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).
   a. Human nature is to want to compete and to win — whether we're playing cards, whether our favorite team is playing basketball, we want to win.
   b. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the greatest victory ever known to man.
2. Jesus came, died, and was resurrected. We, therefore, have no reason to fear death.
   a. We have a great deal of apprehension over our deaths — we fear the pain that shall likely accompany our deaths, we dread leaving those we love, we fear the unknown.
   b. But, Jesus came so that we would not need to fear death — so that we could know that even if we were to lay aside this house of flesh, we would dwell in the eternal city of God.
      1) That is the assurance we have as Christians.
      2) That is the basis of our not having fear at the thought of our deaths.

C. Christ gives us hope because of his own resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-23).

D. Illustration about Charles H. Spurgeon giving his theology to a friend, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #2381.

CHRIST MAKES US FREE FROM SIN

A. The Scriptures teach that Christians have been set free from sin.
   1. "And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Rom. 6:18).
   2. Jn. 8:34-36.
B. Slavery to sin is a real problem.
   1. "While they [false teachers] promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage" (2 Pet. 2: 19).
   2. Slavery to sin is a real problem, because all people sin.
      a. 1 Ki. 8:46.
      b. 1 Jn. 1:8, 10.
   3. Since all people sin, all people are in danger of becoming slaves to sin.
C. Paul describes this slavery (Rom. 7: 14-24).
   1. Paul paints a very bleak picture. He cries out, "Wretched man that I am!"
   2. The situation seems almost hopeless. He sighs, "Who will rescue me from this body of death?"
   3. Illustration about how the Eskimos kill wolves, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #11590.
D. But, Paul had hope (Rom. 7:25-8:4). We knew that he could not get out of sin on his own. He had to rely on the victory and freedom which he could have through Christ.

CONCLUSION

A. We can have freedom in Christ; Christ wants to make us free.
B. Do you have the freedom which comes through faith in Christ?