**LIVING IN LIBERTY**

**II CORINTHIANS 3:17**

 What is liberty? What is freedom?

 Is true freedom being able to eat Ice Cream anytime you want?

 Is True Freedom the absence of all rules? I think that’s called Chaos.
 Is True Freedom defined by our rights and our pursuit of happiness?

 Is True Freedom related to our finances, free from Creditors?

 The world would answer that it’s the *ability* and *opportunity* to do whatever you want, however you want, whenever you want, with whomever you want, with no consequences. Freedom means *indulging* every appetite, *fulfilling* every desire, *yielding* to every temptation. According to the world, freedom means not doing anything you don’t want to do, and not answering to anyone else.

 In short, the world sees freedom as me putting myself and my desires first, and woe to anyone who gets in my way. [If I only had \_\_\_, then I would be free.]
 But as anyone who has tried it knows, that’s not freedom, it’s slavery. Slavery to *sin*, slavery to *self*, slavery to *desires* which can never be satisfied.

 There’s no joy in it, no peace, just a constant chasing after the next thrill, the next pleasure.

 Freedom doesn’t come from following our own desires. Freedom doesn’t require that we have no *limits* or *restrictions* on our actions.

 Freedom is the ability to *reject* sin and to *follow* Christ. It’s the ability to *serve* and *obey* God in any circumstances, pleasant or unpleasant, desirable or undesirable, easy or difficult.

 If you are a Christian, you are truly free. You are free to love God, to serve God, to obey God, to follow God. That’s what true freedom is.

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 That’s the freedom that brings *joy* and *peace*, regardless of our circumstances

 I want you to know a Freedom that you can possess that sets you free regardless of your circumstances in life, it *supersedes* what the Government is doing or not doing, it *goes over* the head of dictators and kings.

 For you see, through Jesus Christ LIBERTY is the birthright of every man, woman, and child.

 We the sons and daughters of Adam.
 You may be born a pauper; you may be an orphan; your family may be altogether unknown; but liberty is his inalienable birthright.

 You may not have a stitch of clothing, except a few rags to cover your body from the cold; but, poor as you may be, GOD has fashioned YOU for freedom—YOU have a right to be free, and if You do not have liberty, Which is Your birthright, Then YOU should not to be *content* until You Possess it.

 The Holy Spirit gives us freedom from anything that tries to *hinder* our Godly progress.

 Through the Almighty power of the Spirit of God we are able to *overcome* any problem that tries to inhibit us from accomplishing God’s will.

 Galatians 5:1 states, “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*”

 For example, a baby circus elephant may originally need to be restrained by a chain around its foot. It will strain and strain against its bonds but after a while it knows that it is impossible to break free, so it eventually gives up.

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 When the elephant is older, all that is needed to keep it from running away is a small rope.

 The adult elephant is very capable of breaking its bond now, but because it has been conditioned with the impossibility of breaking free for so long in its mind, it’s given up without trying!
 Just the flex of its muscle would *pick up* the stake and *break* the rope that has it bound but it has been preprogrammed for bondage.

 Freedom is our birthright but we are like that adult elephant. If he ever discovered his power over the rope he wouldn’t be kept in bondage.

 Freedom is the birthright of the church but we are held by the weak rope of Satan’s lie.

 Let’s flex our spiritual muscles like a modern day Samson and shake free from his bondage.

 Romans 6:17-18, “*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?* 17 *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*”

 Who are you yielding yourself to?

 A man purchased a white mouse to use as food for his pet snake. He dropped the unsuspecting mouse into the snake’s glass cage, where the snake was sleeping in a bed of sawdust. The tiny mouse had a serious problem on his hands. At any moment he could be swallowed alive. Obviously, the mouse needed to come up with a brilliant plan.
 What did the terrified creature do? He quickly set up work covering the snake with sawdust chips until it was completely buried. With that, the mouse apparently thought he had solved his problem.
 The solution; however, came from outside. The man took pity on the silly little mouse and removed him from the cage. No matter how hard we try to *cover* or *deny* our sinful nature, it’s fool’s work. Sin will eventually awake from sleep and shake off its cover.

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 Were it not for the saving grace of the Master’s hand, sin would eat us alive.

 We have been set free from the bondage of sin and death.

 John 8:36, “*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*”

 A bazaar was held in a village in northern India. Everyone brought his wares to trade and sell. One old farmer brought in a whole covey of quail. He had tied a string around one leg of each bird. The other ends of all the strings were tied to a ring which fit loosely over a central stick. He had taught the quail to walk dolefully in a circle, around and around, like mules at a sugarcane mill. Nobody seemed interested in buying the birds until a devout Brahman came along. He believed in the Hindu idea of respect for all life, so his heart of compassion went out to those poor little creatures walking in their monotonous circles.

 “*I want to buy them all!*” he told the merchant, who was elated. After receiving the money, he was surprised to hear the buyer say, “*Now, I want you to set them all free!*”

 “*What is that, sir?*”

 “*You heard me. Cut the strings from their legs and turn them loose. Set them all free!*”
 With a shrug, the old farmer bent down and snipped the strings off the quail. They were freed, at last.
 What happened? The birds simply continued marching around and around in a circle. Finally, the man had to *shoo* them off. But even when they landed some distance away, they resumed their predictable march. Free, unfettered released, yet they kept going in circles as if still tied.

 Salvation cuts the strings of *sin*, *depression*, *discouragement*.

 It is time to *stop* marching and *start* flying.

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 Oswald Chambers (1874-1917) said, “*Some of us are caged by the memories of a sinful past.* “

 Lloyd Ogilvie said, "*The memory of past failure is like sand in the gears of our effectiveness.*"

 God did not put the handcuffs of past memories on you. They are self-imposed.

 What is *holding* you *back* from victory?

 Who is *hindering* you?

 What are you *struggling* with?

 What is *keeping* you from the Holy Ghost?

 Are you tired of being inconsistent?

 You can have *freedom* from fear!

 You can have *dominance* over defeatism!

 “*Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*”

 So how do I get to where the Spirit of the Lord is?

 Psalm 100:1-5, “*Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.*  2 *Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*  3 *Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*  4 *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*  5 *For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*”

 Psalm 16:11, “*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*”

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 Psalm 22:3, “*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*”

 Men are content to be slaves within who would be very indignant at any attempt to make them slaves without.

 As children can give a bird leave to fly so it be in a string to pull it back again, so Satan hath men in a string if they live in sin.

 The beast that runs away with a cord about him is catched by the cord again; so, having Satan’s cords about us, he can pull us in when he lists.

 From this we are freed by the Spirit.

 Aren’t you ready to be free?

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