**In Christ, There Is Liberty**

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 July 4, 2013 marks the 237th anniversary of the birth of this nation. In 1776, a Declaration of Independence was written, stating that God granted to men “certain unalienable rights,” among which are “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” Therefore, every July 4th, we celebrate the anniversary of the day in 1776 when we declared our freedom, or liberty from England.

 Celebrating freedom is a wonderful thing, Yet, have we considered the fact that God (not man) granted liberty to men long before this nation ever existed? In fact, He is the author of liberty or freedom (II Cor. 3:17). What a wonderful gift this is! Even if a man or woman is enslaved in some foreign land, this one can still be free in Christ (Jn. 8:36). Christians are free from sin and Satan, and this is true freedom. How can we obtain this true liberty or freedom? The Bible tells us how.

 David said, “I will walk at liberty: for I have sought your precepts” (Ps. 119:45). David understood the relationship between God’s word and freedom. Isaiah and Jeremiah also used God’s word to “proclaim liberty” to the people (Isa. 61:1; Jer. 34:8). Remember, Isaiah 61:1 was a prophecy concerning Jesus (Lk. 4:18-21). Therefore, not only was Isaiah using God’s word to “proclaim liberty,” but so was Christ when He spoke! James called God’s will “the perfect law of liberty” (Jas. 1:25). Can there be a better description of God’s word than this? By following the word of God, one can be free from sin and Satan (Rom. 6:16-18).

 We cannot separate the work of Christ and the work accomplished in His word. Christ came to set men free, spiritually, and this is revealed in the written word. He said, “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (Jn. 8:36). Our Lord sacrificed Himself for us that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin. His death on the cross and shed blood provided the means by which all men can be saved (free) from sin. It is for this reason that when those at Rome were “obedient from the heart to that standard of teaching ...”, the Christians were then “set free from sin” (Rom. 6:18, 22).

 We recognize the vast difference between liberty and bondage in the physical realm; but many do not recognize this difference in the spiritual realm. This fact is apparent when we see folks struggling in sin daily. Many love being in sin, and do not wish to change. These people do not recognize the difference between spiritual liberty and spiritual bondage!

 Why would one wish to be in oppression and bondage when he could be free? One reason why people refuse to leave the slavery of sin for freedom in Christ is because they have been deceived. Peter warned of false teachers who, “promise them liberty, but they themselves are slaves of corruption.” Therefore, folks might think they are free, but they are actually in bondage. Why? “For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved” (II Pet. 2:19).

 Men may think they are “free” when they: use drugs, drink alcohol, commit fornication, use God’s name in vain, worship God when/how they please, etc. The truth is that such people are in bondage to sin and Satan who has fooled them into thinking that their actions are the result of freedom, and worshipping God “in spirit and in truth” is bondage. Of course, the exact opposite is true! May we open our eyes and see how Satan has us fooled. Isaiah warned of conditions like this when he said, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” (Isa. 5:20). Sadly, this is where many people are today!

 It is fun to shoot off fireworks, etc., in celebration of our nation’s founding. Yet, let us never forget nor take for granted the true freedom offered to men through Christ, as is revealed in the Bible. This spiritual freedom can be experienced in any place on earth, at any time of year, by any person (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11). Are you free from sin (Mk. 16:16)?

*-- You are invited to visit with the Caneyville church of Christ. Times of services: Sun.: 10:00 am, 10:45 am, 5:00 pm; Wed.: 7:00 pm. Website: http://caneyvillechurchofchrist.com Tune in to our radio program on 99.9 FM at 10:30 am and 1570 AM at 8:30 am, Mon-Fri. Questions? Call: (270) 589-4167*