

Act As Free Men

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: 1 Peter 2:16

This country was built upon the foundation of freedom. Yet this was not just based upon the opinion of the nation's founders – it is rooted in God's founding of the human race. Man in his natural state is free (speech, thought, action, association, etc.). God gave us free will so that we would choose to serve Him. Yet Satan, from the beginning, has worked diligently to bring man into bondage. Why? A lack of freedom hinders one from serving God and having a relationship with Him.

Things By Which Man Is Enslaved

- Enslaved by sin – Satan introduced sin in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-6); Adam and Eve had enjoyed being in the presence of God, but were driven out (Genesis 3:8, 24); sin has kept man enslaved ever since (John 8:24); this applies to all (Romans 3:23)
- Enslaved by the opinions of others – this is when man is forced into accepting the will of others; this happened in Sodom (Genesis 19:4-5); Lot resisted, yet they tried to impose their beliefs by force (Genesis 19:6-9)
- Enslaved by human governments – slavery in Egypt, first of the Egyptians (Genesis 47:19, 25), then of the Israelites (Exodus 2:23); resulted in harsh treatment (Exodus 1:13-14), confinement (Exodus 5:2), and a lack of religious freedom (Exodus 5:3)
- Why would Satan prefer for man to be enslaved rather than free? – enslavement to sin severs our fellowship with God; enslavement of human opinions and human government makes serving the Lord difficult and/or dangerous

Freedom Restored in Christ

- Jesus came to set us free (John 8:36; 2 Corinthians 3:17) – let us notice HOW Christ makes us free
- Free from sin – people often do not realize they are enslaved to sin (John 8:33-34); without freedom from sin in Christ, we would face eternal damnation (Romans 6:23); Jesus came to set us free (Hebrews 2:14-15); we gain this freedom by obeying a certain form of doctrine (Romans 6:17-18, 3-4)
- Free from any obligation to obey human commandments in religious matters (Colossians 2:20-23) – Jesus defended His disciples' right to refuse to submit to the "tradition of the elders" (Matthew 15:2, 6-9); Paul did the same (Galatians 2:3-5); this may have consequences, but have no fear (Matthew 10:28)
- Free from civil authorities – yes, we submit to civil authorities to an extent (Romans 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14); but we're told in the same context to "act as free men" (1 Peter 2:16); we must obey God over men (Acts 5:29); for laws that are of no consequence, we comply so as to not cause trouble (1 Timothy 2:2; 1 Peter 2:15); but our citizenship is in

heaven (Philippians 3:20); our king is Christ (John 18:37); our law is His word (John 12:48)

Conclusion

- Peter said we are to “act as free men” (1 Peter 2:16) – why? ... that is what we are in Christ
- Let us not esteem lightly God’s gift of freedom – show gratitude by using this freedom to serve Him