

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

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The Freedom Christ Gives

July 3, 2016

Sermon Text: Romans 6:14-18

Scripture Reading: John 8:30-59

This is the time of year that we in the United States celebrate and remember our freedom by recalling the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America In Congress, July 4, 1776

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the

same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

The writers then go on to list their grievances and the injustices of the King of England for which they conclude they are justified in declaring themselves to be independent states.

Freedom, you see.

For the Christian, July 4th reminds us of a greater freedom – that effected for us by God in Christ. It is an eternal freedom, irrevocable, purchased not with our blood in battle but by the blood of Christ at the cross.

Let's take some time then this morning to consider this freedom in Christ and remind ourselves just how great it is –

and how we must never permit anyone to try to take it from us.

Rom 6:14-23 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (15) What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! (16) Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? (17) But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, (18) and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

(19) I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. (20) For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. (21) But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. (22) But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you

get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. (23) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 8:1-2 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Rom 8:13-17 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (14) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (15) For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" (16) The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (17) and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

2Co 3:16-18 But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. (17) Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (18) And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of

glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Gal 4:6-9 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (7) So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (8) Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. (9) But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

Gal 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

1Pe 2:16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

The Christian is a free-man. This freedom is thorough and complete, setting us free from every kind of bondage. For example:

Freedom From Slavery to Sin

Very early on in the history of redemption the Bible gives us the account of Israel's slavery in Egypt:

Exo 1:8-14 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. (9) And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. (10) Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." (11) Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. (12) But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. (13) So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves (14) and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.

This slavery is given to us as a picture of our slavery to sin and the devil the moment we were born into this world, just like all the rest of mankind. And you know how the account goes on. God raises up Moses who issues God's command to Pharaoh to let the people go. He refuses, but by the Lord's mighty arm he is compelled to let the people go. We see the Lord Jesus Christ portrayed as the Passover Lamb whose blood protects God's people, the destruction of Pharaoh's armies,

and the crossing of the Red Sea on the way to Canaan. This is freedom and it is a picture of the freedom Christ effects for us, redeeming us with His blood from slavery to sin and the devil.

1Pe 1:17-19 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, (18) knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, (19) but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Inherent in that word "ransomed" is *freedom*. A person whose ransom is paid is then set free by their captor, you see.

The Christian no longer is a slave to sin. He has been set free from its dominion and given a new Spirit to lead him:

1Co 12:2 You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.

No longer. When a person comes to repentance and faith in Christ and the Lord regenerates them, that slave becomes a son. The power of sin is broken. An entirely new dynamic and mindset is born:

Freedom From Condemnation

Rom 8:1-2 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Let's consider this freedom in light of our *conscience*. Recently I saw a comment online at a discussion about discerning the Lord's leading. When someone mentioned "feelings" a fellow jumped in with the typical anti-feeling argument that feelings cannot be trusted. He said "the Christian's conscience is still fallen, so you can only trust God's Word."

Without getting into too much detail, let's just focus on his statement "the Christian's conscience is fallen." Really? So a Christian's conscience is no better than that of an unregenerate person? Let's do what the guy says and look at Scripture on this:

Heb 9:8-14 By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (9) (which is symbolic for the present age). **According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,** (10) but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until

Rom 8:5-9 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

(6) For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. (7) For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. (8) Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (9) You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

Rom 8:12-15 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. (13) For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (14) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (15) For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Freedom from sin and the devil, you see. We still battle sin in our corrupting flesh, but the point is that we BATTLE it because that is no longer who we are! The Spirit in us leads us and gives us our real new identity as children of God.

the time of reformation. (11) But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) (12) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. (13) For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, (14) **how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.**

Heb 10:15-22 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, (16) "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: **I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,**" (17) then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." (18) Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. (19) Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, (20) by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, (21) and since we have a great

priest over the house of God, (22) **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**

See it? This is not ambiguous. The unsaved person has an "evil conscience." The Christian's conscience has been purified in Christ, sprinkled clean! And the contrast here is between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. It is between having the Law on stone tablets and having the Law written on our hearts. So by conscience here, the Apostle means "the new, renewed, regenerate man who we truly are as a person in Christ." When this fellow claims that the Christian's conscience is fallen, *what he is really claiming is that Christ's salvation does not really change us at all but only results in our sins being forgiven, leaving us though a sinner in bondage to sin.*

I had another lady write me this week asking for advice. She suspects she is in a cult that claims to be a Christian church. She said she feels very uneasy there and feels like a slave, and the people have told her that if she leaves she will go to hell. She added though that she knows she must not trust her feelings but only Scripture so did I have a verse for her? You see the danger. Think about this. The Christian

is LED by the Spirit in him. Certainly the Spirit is going to effect that leading through our conscience, through Scripture, but also through some “feeling.” Also, notice that it is wrong to set these things in conflict with one another. When the Lord directs us it is not going to be Scripture saying one thing and our conscience or feelings or the Spirit another. Certainly we guard against the flesh and against deceptions of the world and the devil, but as the Apostle to the Hebrews wrote, the Christian’s conscience is cleansed.

Freedom From Death

As we grow older in this life, if death has not affected your life very much, it will. Friends and family die and are no more. Places you grew up in become vacant or occupied by strangers. Death separates. It is a cruel tyrant. It changes our world and our lives. I saw a picture of a man recently who was marching in a veterans’ parade that he had marched in ever since WWII with his army buddies who were in his unit. But this year, he marched alone with tears in his eyes. He is the only one still living. Death is our enemy.

But in Christ...see for yourself:

1Co 15:51-57 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) in a

moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. (53) For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. (54) When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (55) "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (56) The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. (57) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 8:10-11 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (11) If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Heb 2:14-15 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, (15) and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

As you proceed through life, death is going to touch you in one way or another and ultimately you will pass out of this life yourself. It is vital that we keep our eyes set on the victory over death that Christ has given us – eternal life. The New Heavens and Earth yet to come. It is very, very important in other words to heed God's Word on this:

Php 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Col 3:1-4 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. (2) Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (3) For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (4) When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Just as the Israelites had an inheritance in the Promised Land, so every Christian as a child of God has been given an inheritance in our perfect, eternal Promised Land, the New Heavens and Earth. We MUST think often of this and look forward to it,

setting (as Paul says) our minds on the things above. Listen to it some more:

1Pe 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, (5) who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Rom 8:14-17 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (15) For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" (16) The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (17) and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

And there it is. Our Independence Day has taken place, and yet it is still to come in all its completeness. I think there are going to be some real fireworks when the heavens open and Christ is revealed. You are going to see it. We are going to be there.