TITLE: Real Freedom

TEXT: John 17:1-8; John 17:13; Heb. 2:17-3:1; Jn. 10:17-18; Ro. 7:14-21; Gal. 5:1; Ro.8:1-4, 12-15

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about real freedom and some myths associated with what real freedom is.

 The thing that most defines the American experience is freedom. The search for freedom is what brought the first pilgrims to our shores. It was a deep desire for freedom that caused our Founding Fathers to go to war with Great Brittan to break the bonds of English rule and tyranny in America.

  Freedom rings loud and clear in our Declaration of Independence, Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Our Founding Fathers that signed the Declaration of Independence, which in essence was a declaration of war with Great Brittan, made a pledge. Just before signing their names to this magnificent document, the last sentence of this Declaration says:” ***And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.”***

As Americans we love our freedom don’t we?

 I believe we all take our freedom very much for granted, but we love it none the less.

Freedom is never appreciated as much as when it is lost.

  Many will say that as Americans today we are not as free as we once were. And I believe that may be true in a lot of ways.

 With the expansion of Government comes a loss of freedom…

President Gerald Ford in an address to a joint session of congress made this insightful statement: *“Government big enough to supply everything you need is big enough to take everything you have ... The course of history shows that as a government grows, liberty (freedom) decreases.*

How true this is! The more government grows the more regulations and restrictions on the people.

Freedom, a lot of times, is taken for granted until it is threatened to be taken away.

 Isn’t that what the “Tea Party” movement a few years ago was really all about? Government was increasing and personal liberty decreasing, in that as the government grows it is always at the cost of the citizens of the nation.

 In watching some of the democratic debates this year one thing that has jumped out at me is that each candidate is running on a platform of more government give a ways.

Free healthcare, free college, pay off everyone’s student loans, raise the minimum wage to 15.00 hour, the green new deal which encompasses things such as making every building in America energy efficient by taking away any fossil fuel use and everything updated to run on solar or electric, the same with cars, trucks and even planes.

One independent estimate on the green new deal alone is 60 trillion dollars over ten years.

We already have a deficit of 26 trillion dollars. That is how much in debt we are in as a nation. Just adding the green new deal alone would add another 60 trillion dollars.

Our GDP, gross domestic product, in 2019 was 20 trillion dollars. GDP is the total amount of money the nation produces through all its businesses.

How do they say they will pay for all this “free” stuff? Heavy taxes on the top 1% of American businesses.

Hear is the problem….Just this one program would get our deficit up to around 87 trillion dollars.

Take all the money, 100% of the money of the top 1% and you get about 25 trillion dollars.

Who gets to pay the rest, the approx. 62 trillion dollars of debt that is left? You do, I do through increased tax rates. And not just a little increase.

Question? How can you reign in these huge budget deficits by keeping upping our spending with all this free stuff?

 Answer—you can’t unless you radically reduce freedom!

 The freedom to retain a reasonable portion of the money that you have worked for!

 You see whenever the government says they are going give you free stuff they have to increase their spending to do it because nothing is free. What they are not saying is that they are going to increase the amount of money that they take from you in the form of taxes to do it!

We know this is true because the government is a nonproductive entity! They make no money of their own! They produce nothing!

Every dime that government spends in all its programs comes directly from the people they are supposed to represent..

Government only grows at the cost of freedom.

One of my favorite quotes of Thomas Jefferson is this: *“The two enemies of the people are criminals and government, so let us tie the second down with the chains of the constitution so the second will not become the legalized version of the first.” Thomas Jefferson*

No free man or woman wants to give up or have their freedoms diminished.

Isn’t that what keeps many people from becoming a Christian? A false belief, that if they come to Christ, they will lose or diminish their freedom.

Many people believe that if they submit their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ, they will lose their freedom; they cannot do everything that they want to do in life.

  A tragic flaw in this reasoning is that a person who is not under the lordship of Jesus Christ is the one who is really not free in the first place.

The Bible says that we are all in bondage to sin, to the lusts of our own flesh, to the whims of an evil spiritual opponent who wishes to see us destroyed, and to a world that is alienated from the one who created it and brings true freedom.

This myth then precipitates another lie: You can be a disciple of Jesus without a radical submission to Jesus in every area of your life. This desire to have it both ways took on a very seductive heresy a few years ago when we heard about Jesus being preached as our Savior but not our Lord. This is a lie. If He is not Lord, He is not Savior.

So the question that arises is this: can there be freedom in submission?

 Let’s look to Jesus this morning as an example?

**John 17:1 -8, 13 (NIV) After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.  For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.  Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.  I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.  And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.  Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you.  For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. . “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.**

Let me pause here and ask two questions…

#1. Was Jesus submissive to the Father? Did Jesus leave us an example of submission to follow?

You can’t get any more submissive than Jesus was! **I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.**

What was the work Jesus was given to do? To come to earth and meet us in our need, reveal the love of God to sinful man and then to die on a cross as an atonement for that sin.

There are many reasons why it was necessary for God to take on the form of flesh and blood and come to earth.

 One reason was so that He could experience life as we experience life, so He could feel pain and sorrow as we feel pain and sorrow..

  For the sacrifice He was going to make to be sufficient He had to identify with us in every way!

**Hebrews 2:17 - 3:1 (NIV) For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.  Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.**

Did you catch that? **For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.  Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.**

In order for Jesus sacrifice for sins to be just in God’s eyes He had to identify with man in every way.

Adam was created sinless and through his choice he disobeyed God and became a sinner. Being the first parent he then passed his sin nature on to his children, and they their children after them….

Thus sin has infected the entirety of the Human race.

 For justice to be complete would necessitate that God take the form of man, reduce Himself to mere flesh and blood, the creator taking on the form of the created, so He could be tempted in every way just as we are, and after remaining sinless, never choosing to disobey Gods righteousness, offer His life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of sinful man.

  Adam was sinless and chooses to sin, so Jesus, being tempted in every way just as the first sinless man was, yet never giving in to sin whereby He remained sinless, gave His life as the needed sacrifice.

 Sinless man brought about the curse and sinless man paid the price so the curse could be lifted.

And what a high price Jesus paid…

Experiencing pain that no other has ever had to endure…Being both severely flogged and then being crucified..

 For most it was either one or the other---Jesus suffered both!

 The pain of total separation from the Father as our sins came upon Jesus and the Father had to turn His head from the Son as all sin, past, present and future were laid upon Him. As He who knew so sin became sins sacrifice!

  We hear that great anguish from the cross when Jesus cried out: **My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**

Question: Was Jesus submissive to the Father? Did Jesus leave us an example of submission to follow? Yes! You can’t get any more submissive than Jesus was.

The second question then is: Did this submission come at the cost of His freedom?

 Did Jesus give up His freedom by His submissiveness to the Father?

**John 10:17 - 18 (NIV) The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again.  No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. …**

Does it sound like Jesus forfeited Freedom for submission?

No! He could not have been freer than when He was submissive to the Father, and the same is true for you and I…

We will never be freer than when we submit ourselves to Jesus Christ through giving Him Lordship of our life.

Those who have embraced Jesus as Lord and savior of their life are a million times freer than those who have not..

Before we come to Christ we are all in bondage to sin! Sin was our master!

**Romans 7:14 - 21 (NIV) We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.  I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.  And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.  As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.  I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.  For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.  Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.**

What is Paul talking about here? He is talking about our bondage to sin!

**We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.**

Outside of Christ Lordship we all are slaves to sin!

That is why this portion of Scripture resonates with us so much! **I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.**

Why?

**Because I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin!** **Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.**

Sin, our flesh can make us do what we don’t want to do!

 If our flesh can make us do things that we don’t want to do then can we say that we are really free? NO!

Have you ever gotten into an argument with a spouse or a close friend and said something hurtful to them and the instant you said the words you regretted it?  Even as they were formulating in your mind you knew they were wrong to say but you said them anyway?

You swear to yourself that you will never do that again but the next time you get into an argument with a loved one the same thing happens!

That is the kind of things that Paul is talking about!

**I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.**

At the end of this discourse Paul says:

**Romans 7:24 - 25 (NIV) What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

Does this sound like the cry of a free man? Someone who is not in deep bondage?

Paul gives us the answer he found to this dilemma of being controlled by his sinful nature in the next verse.

**What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

**Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

**What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?** **Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

Emphasis on the word Lord! ***koo'-ree-os*** **From  kuros (*supremacy*); *supreme* in authority, the *controller*; by implication  Lord, master.**

What is the truth the apostle is telling us here?

That true freedom will only come through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ whereby we have given Him Lordship of our life. Made Him supreme in authority in our hearts! Allowing Him to be the controller!

 Freedom to control our own sinful nature can only come as we surrender our life to Jesus!

Does that surrender make us less free or more free?

   It makes us more free! Surrender to Christ will make us freer than we have ever been before!

**Galatians 5:1 (NIV) It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**

Once we surrender our life to Christ we are filled with His Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Christ now lives within our hearts..

It didn’t come with a loss of freedom!  We still have control! We can choose to obey the leading of the Holy Spirit or not obey Him! So we have total control, total freedom!

As a Spirit filled Christian we will feel condemnation when we disobey God, but we are still free to do it.

**Romans 8:1 - 4 (NIV)** **1Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,** **2because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.** **3For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,** **4in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

**Romans 8:12 - 15 (NIV)** **12Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.** **13For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,** **14because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** **15For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, *“Abba,* Father.”**

There is no greater degree of freedom then the freedom we find in Christ Jesus.

Ironically we only will find that great freedom through surrender.

Asking Jesus to forgive us our sins and invite Him to literally come into our hearts surrendering ourselves to Him. Allowing Him to be Lord, allowing Him supremacy in our life.

When we do this we will be freer than we have ever been before….

  For it is only then that the chains that bind us, the chains and bondage of our sinful nature can be, once and for all and forever broken.

**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,  because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.**

This morning, have you been set free from the law of sin and death?

Have you embraced Jesus as your Lord so that He can be your Savior?

Have you embraced real freedom through total surrender of your life to Christ?

**For it is for freedom that Christ has set us free!**

Or as Martin Luther King once said*:*

*“Free at last; free at last; thank God Almighty we are free at last.”*