### TITLE: EQUALITY and FREEDOM

TEXT: Gal. 3:28, 5:1; Gen. 2:16-17; Ro. 7:14-25, 8:1-4

Hymn Jesus paid it all --My country tis of thee

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about equality and Freedom. Equality and freedom goes to the very roots of America civilization. Our founders set as the pillars of our country the general concept of equality and freedom, that all men were created equal and free to pursue life, liberty and happiness.

 It is a major premise in our Declaration of Independence….

 Does everyone know what our Declaration of Independence is and what is says?

 At a time when the United States consisted of 13 colonies under the rule of Great Brittan and King George things had gotten so bad that our founding Fathers wrote up a Declaration of Separation from Great Brittan and the tyranny of King George.

### It starts out:

### The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America

 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 to 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 affect 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.

Then they list some 27 grievances against the King that has lead them to declare their independence from Great Brittan

And then after listing those 27 grievances they go on….

 In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us.

We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce (ăk″wē-ĕs) in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

 We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levey war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. 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.

It is interesting that God is mentioned 4 times in this declaration….

Natures God, Creator, Supreme Judge of the World, Protection of Divine Providence are all direct references to God!

 If our founding fathers indeed intended for there to a separation between Church and State where God had no place in the affairs of Government then why would they refer to Him four different times in our first government document, our Declaration of Independence?

There is a Biblical base for our Declaration of Independence.

 One of the Biblical principles applied there is equality and another is Freedom and it is these two that we are going to talk about today.

* That all men are created equal
* That all men have some rights given to them by God
* That among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

 In the time of our Founding Fathers when the Declaration was written they had the King of England who placed himself far above all other men. He was a tyrant imposing his will on those whom he ruled over.

 He had also set up governors to do his bidding here in the colonies that saw themselves as superior to the American colonists…The King and his appointed lords saw themselves as better, a higher creative design then those who they ruled over.

So let’s talk about our Founders concept of equality that they gleaned from the pages of Scripture itself.

**Galatians 3:28(NIV)**  **28There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

 In Christ, in our position as a Christian, There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

So the Founders took this principle and incorporated it into their declaration….

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.

They said that it is “self-evident,” that all men are created equal.

 When born all men enter this world as equals, born in the image and likeness of God Himself.

 Some may be born into families with wealth and some born into families that are impoverished but all born a human being with the same attributes and basic rights as any other human being.

How is this self evident?

 Let’s look at the issue of American slavery.

 Many white people looked upon the black person as inferior, not equal in any way with a white person.

 This is what the civil war was all about.

 Now if you have a white man and stand a black man next to him you see a difference. One is white and one is black.

 Now ones upbringing and family traditions may look at that picture and think they have not been created equal—one is white and one is black. And their tradition has taught them that white is superior to black.

 But now let’s introduce something else into the picture.

 Let us think of a picture where we have a white man standing by a black man and in-between them is a pig.

 Now we simply have two men standing in a picture with a pig.

 It is self evident that another species has entered the picture and with the entrance of the other species it helps us see that we may have a black man and a white man in the picture but only two species---human and swine.

 One of the most famous cases in the history of the Supreme Court was the Dred Scott case.

 The case was about a man born a slave, Dred Scott, and his case was based on the fact that although he and his wife Harriet Scott were slaves, he had lived with his master Dr. John Emerson in states and territories where slavery was illegal according to both state laws and the [Northwest Ordinance of 1787](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest_Ordinance_of_1787).

The United States Supreme Court decided 7-2 against Scott, finding that neither he nor any other person of [African](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African) ancestry could claim [citizenship in the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizenship_in_the_United_States), and therefore Scott could not bring suit in federal court under [diversity of citizenship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diversity_of_citizenship) rules. Moreover, Scott's temporary residence outside [Missouri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missouri) did not bring about his emancipation under the [Missouri Compromise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missouri_Compromise), which the court ruled unconstitutional as it would improperly deprive Scott's owner of his legal property.

 Abraham Lincoln vehemently disagreed with this court decision.

While [Chief Justice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_Justice) [Roger B. Taney](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_B._Taney) had hoped to settle issues related to slavery and Congressional authority by this decision, it aroused outrage and deepened sectional tensions. President [Abraham Lincoln](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln)'s [Emancipation Proclamation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emancipation_Proclamation) in 1863, and the

Post civil war Thirteenth, Fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to our Constitution nullified this Supreme Court decision.

Lincoln stood upon the premise that:

 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 (freedom) and the pursuit of happiness.

**There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

All men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights…

**"Unalienable is defined as being incapable of being alienated, that is, sold and transferred."**

You cannot surrender, sell or transfer unalienable rights; they are a gift from the creator to the individual and cannot under any circumstances be surrendered or taken. All individuals have unalienable rights.

Our Declaration of Independence says that among them are the right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness…

Liberty, freedom is an unalienable right. A right granted to us by God himself.

**Galatians 5:1(NIV)**  **1It 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.**

 In the Christian perspective it is for freedom that Christ has set us free…

The Greek word used for freedom here is:

***el-yoo-ther-ee'-ah*;**

 ***freedom*—liberty.**

It comes from the Greek word:

***el-yoo'-ther-os***

***unrestrained* (to *go* at pleasure), that is, (as a citizen) *not* *a* *slave* (whether *freeborn* or *manumitted*), or (generally) *exempt* (from obligation or liability):—free (man, woman), at liberty.**

How is the right of liberty, freedom, self evident….

 It is a basic human right that goes all the way back to the beginning in the Garden of Eden….

**Genesis 2:16-17(NIV)**  **16And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;**  **17but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”**

You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, even the tree God commanded man not to eat from-- they had the freedom to do so if they so choose…

How do we know that? Because they so choose…..

 We were created with free will, the right of choice.

 So freedom is inbred into us from birth.

That is why when freedom is taken away we strive so hard to regain that freedom.

The thing that bothers those incarcerated in jails and prisons the most is that their freedom has largely been taken away.

 I still get a moment of panic every time I go up to the jail for Bible study with the inmates when that cell door closes behind me and I hear that electronic lock click into place…..

 I cannot even imagine how the inmates must feel as I know that in an hour or two I will be free to leave---they have lost that freedom and cannot…

**1It 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.**

 In Christ, when we become a Christian, there is a setting free that takes place.

 In fact, until we become a Christian we really do not know what real freedom truly is….

 Even though we were created to be free, we, like those incarcerated in any jail or prison, have made choices that have taken away our freedom.

Each and every one of us here today has been a slave at one time in our life.

Even such great men of the faith as the Apostle Paul knew the hard bondage of slavery.
**Romans 7:14-25(NIV)**  **14We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.**

Each and everyone one of us has been sold into the slavery of sin and we sold ourselves into that slavery by choosing to sin, choosing to disobey God.

Paul tells of his own experience with that slavery to sin…. **Romans 7:15I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.
16And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.
17As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.**  **18I 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.**  **19For 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.**  **20Now 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.**  **21So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.**  **22For in my inner being I delight in God’s law;**  **23but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.**  **24What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**  **25Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

**24What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?
25Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

What caused Paul to struggle so with his nature to sin?

 It was because he was created to be free and found that he was held captive by his own sin…

 **For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.**

It is this struggle with the lack of freedom from sin that causes him to cry out in frustration of soul: **24What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

Then he gives the answer to that question in the next verse….**25Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

He came to understand the truth of Gal. 5:1:

**1It 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.**

Again this comes down to our choice.

At least sin is a choice for the Christian.

A non-Christian will sin because they are literally held captive by their sinful nature. They have nothing within themselves to help restrain their nature to sin.

 Once we become a Christian by asking Jesus to come into our hearts and we surrender our life to Him He gives us something that we did not have before and that is His Holy Spirit comes to dwell within our hearts.

 And with that infilling of our hearts with His Holy Spirit we have the ability to do what we could not do before and that is be able to not sin….

It is what Paul goes on to explain in:

**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.**

The law of the Spirit of life, the Holy Spirit, sets us free from the law of sin and death, our own sinful nature.

How? By the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit giving us the ability to do that which we could not do before and that is go and sin no more…..

**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.**

The choice is still our choice to make but now we have the power to make the right choices…

 We make those right choices by choosing to live our life yielding to the Holy Spirit who now resides within our heart and not choosing to live according to our inherent sinful nature.

Paul is saying the same thing here as he did in:

**Galatians 5:1(NIV)
1It 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.**

 Although there are many today who are striving to remove many of our freedoms from us in this nation we are still the freest nation on earth….

You would think that being as free as we are in America that all Americans would be in a constant state of rejoicing because of living in this “Land of the Free”.

 Yet many don’t seem to --- instead we have many who walk around as though they were not free men but slaves…..

Why? Because even though they live in the freest nation on earth they are living lives in bondage to their own sinful natures….

There are people who live in Communist China today who are actually freer than many in our own nation because they have been set free from their bondage to their own sinful nature by receiving Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of their life.

True freedom is in the heart of man and comes to us only when we ask Jesus to come into our heart and then surrender our life to Him.

Paul and Silas, chained to a wall in a Philippian jail were freer that their Philippian jailer who was in charge of them…at least until that Philippian jailer later that night accepted the Lord through the witness of Paul and Silas.

Christ admonition to us as His Church today----

**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.**

**Do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery…**

You see, after we come to Christ, when it comes to sin, the choice is really up to us whether we remain in bondage to it or not….

 **And so he** (God) **condemned sin in sinful man,
in 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.**

 Or as the great old hymn that we sang earlier proclaimed:

Jesus paid it all-- all to Him I owe—sin had left its crimson stain—Jesus washed it white as snow….

This morning are you living in the freedom that Christ has secured for you to live in? Freedom from the “old Man”, the “old self”, our inherent nature to sin?

**For 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.**

**Amen**

As American Christians I think that it is important to remember our foundations of freedom that this nation was built upon and the faith of the men that sacrificed so much to give us the freedoms that we often take for granted today….

 I would encourage you to acquaint or re-acquaint yourself with our Declaration of Independence as it reveals to us the great faith that our founding fathers built this nation upon..

I am providing this Declaration that led to our freedoms to anyone that wants one….

### The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America

 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.

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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 to 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.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislature.

He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states:

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing taxes on us without our consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury:

For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses:

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule in these colonies:

For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:

For suspending our own legislatures and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy of the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

 We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levey war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. 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.

*(References to God that our Founders used in this declaration are underlined)*