

**"Freedom"**  
July 1, 2018



## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Luke 4:18-19, Galatians 3:22; John 5:24-26,1  
Corinthians 15:50-58; Proverbs 3:5-6, Philippians  
4:4-7; Jeremiah 34:17, Luke 13:22-35;  
Galatians 5:13-14

### **DAY 1 - Freedom comes from whom?**

**Read Luke 4:18-19, Galatians 3:22**

In the early days of Jesus's public ministry, he explained why he was sent and what he intended to accomplish. He proclaimed freedom for the prisoner and the oppressed. Much of the New Testament speaks about finding true and eternal freedom in Christ. We often behave as though wealth or power will give us freedom because we will be able to afford anything we need. What happens, however, when we need something money cannot buy - something like the peace, hope and assurance that comes from knowing we will spend eternal life with the Lord?

- **How do you define freedom? Do you tend to define it politically or theologically? What is the difference?**
- **What prisoners and oppressed people was Christ talking about?**
- **Political freedom provides many desirable opportunities like voting, seeking jobs you would enjoy, or traveling where you want go. Name some important things that do not result from**

## **political freedom? How can you obtain those things?**

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to distinguish between the benefits of political freedom and the benefits of living the freedom that Jesus alone provides.

### **DAY 2**

**Read John 5:24-26, 1 Corinthians 15:50-58**

Jesus promised that those who believed in him would gain eternal life and freedom from the power of death and sin. The words written by Paul in the text from 1 Corinthians reinforce what Jesus said about his final victory.

Sometimes we get confused about the fact that we sin even after we become believers who profess Jesus as our Lord. We wonder, "What kind of victory is that?" The idea of dying can still frighten us even when we believe in eternal life in Christ. Most of us learn to live with these tensions and accept them as part of being fallible human beings.

- **How can we be free of the power of sin and still be sinners at the same time?**
- **How did Jesus overcome sin and death? What led to his final victory?**
- **Do you believe that Jesus provides all you need to gain life eternal? What role do you play in the process?**

Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for Christ's sacrifice for us - a sacrifice that can free us from the fear of death or enslavement to sin.

### **DAY 3**

**Read Proverbs 3:5-6, Philippians 4:4-7**

During the week when America celebrates Independence Day, Christ followers should pause to consider the difference between national independence and our individual dependence on God in Christ Jesus. Sometimes, in our enthusiasm for living in a free nation where patriotism is celebrated, we forget that God calls us to be radically dependent on God for understanding, wisdom, purpose and our eternal salvation. Let us remember that as we celebrate our great and free country, we should celebrate the eternal freedom that comes from Christ through our submission and obedience to God.

- **Reflect on the difference between living in a politically free society and living in a society where people often behave as though they are free from the Lordship of Jesus Christ.**
- **Is it possible to live with political freedom and also live under the Lordship of Jesus?**
- **Do you ever assert your independence as independence from God? Do you subordinate God's teaching and plan to your own understanding and plans?**

Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for your freedom to worship God openly and without persecution. There are many people in our broken world who do not enjoy that blessing. Then ask God to help you live in radical dependency on him as your life unfolds in a country that celebrates its independence.

## **DAY 4 - Freedom to choose.**

**[Read Jeremiah 34:17, Luke 13:22-35](#)**

If we go all the way back to the creation stories in Genesis, we see that God created humans with the freedom to choose to obey or disobey him. Although God wants us to reciprocate his love for us, he will not force us to love or obey him. Our text from Jeremiah reminds us that as we exercise our freedom to choose, there are consequences

for making choices that are not within God's will for us. Jesus instructed his listeners to enter through the narrow gate - to make a choice for Jesus - and lamented the fact that many in Jerusalem would not follow him.

- **How often, when you are confronted with a difficult choice, do you pause to consider how your choice will be seen by God?**
- **Do you ever feel torn between what our culture tempts you to do and what Jesus taught us to do by his example and teaching?**
- **Reflect on the reasons that God created us with free will. Some people speculate that it would have been better if God had created us without the freedom to choose. What do you think about this subject?**

Ask God for the strength and wisdom to make good and godly choices. Pray for someone you know who has suffered the consequences of making bad choices. If you are that person, ask someone else to pray for you as well.

## **DAY 5**

### **Read Galatians 5:13-14**

God wants us to use our lives in ways that honor and glorify God. He gave us freedom for a reason and expects us to use our freedom for God's purposes, not our own. Too often we become complacent once we have experienced Christ's saving grace. Paul tells us that we are to use our freedom to love our neighbors and nurture our communities. We often forget that we are called to share the Good News that led us to the assurance of our own salvation.

- **Paul warns us not to destroy our freedom. What do you think he meant by that warning?**
- **What roles have others played in your faith journey? Can you identify someone who loved**

## you and led you into your love for Jesus?

- **How are you using your freedom to love your neighbors?**

Ask God to help you use your freedom wisely. If you are squandering your freedom, pray a prayer of confession and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your steps, so that your example and teachings guide others to become truly free in Christ.

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