

From My Bible

Sermon Notes & Outlines



Freedom & Liberty

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Introduction

These messages are compiled from study notes and outlines of my own and many others. I hope they are a help to you.

I'm sure that all of us have at times "*borrowed*" or "*used*" a sermon we heard or read somewhere along the way. A thought, a word, or an idea jumped out to us from another preacher and we took that thing and ran with it. You have probably used an outline from a preacher brother but ended up preaching something that was uniquely different. Same idea, it just came out differently when you preached. Using your own thoughts, experiences, and illustrations.....the message became your own.

I heard an old-time preacher once say, "*Any message worth preaching ought to be worth preaching again!*" Well, I have certainly preached some sermons again and again. I have borrowed from others to preach theirs again too. Please use these messages as the Lord leads and preach His Word over and over again!

I make no claim of complete originality for this material. Also, please remember that these messages are not expected to substitute for your own personal study of the Word of God! The thoughts and ideas are given as a catalyst to help begin your ideas on a given passage of Scripture or trigger a seed thought to get you going. It is my prayer that the "*stuff*" contained here will further kindle the fire of God's message that is already in your heart. Your own thinking, praying, and studying will be necessary to guide you into the delivery of His Word to your own people.

May these sermons become *messages* from the Lord that He uses in your own life as He has used them in mine.

Appreciating Our Freedom

Text – Psalms 33:12

Introduction: Each year, marks another birthday for the United States. While celebrating this great occasion, we must not forget the rich Christian heritage this country was founded on. No other country had its beginnings more entwined with religious beliefs than the United States. Our forefathers came here in search of religious freedom, risking their lives so they could worship God freely.

Our founding fathers were convinced that the Psalmist was right when he wrote in **Psalm 33:12**, “*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord . . .*” Practically everything that happened in our nation’s history was based upon deep religious convictions.

- The Bible was the main textbook in education arenas
- God was part of class discussions with due respect given
- Our earliest universities were founded to train preachers.

Harvard was established in 1636, their stated purpose was for students to know God and to recognize that Christ is the foundation of all learning.

Yale was established in 1701, they said, “*God is the source of all wisdom,*” and required all students to attend daily prayer services.

Princeton was established in 1746, Princeton proclaimed, “*Cursed is all learning contrary to the cause of Christ.*”

The early leaders of this nation unashamedly went to their knees time and time again, seeking wisdom from God for decisions they needed to make.

Patrick Henry said, *“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists but by Christians. Not on religion but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”*

We must be careful that we do not forget or take for granted the price these men paid to secure our freedom. To do so would cheapen that payment! Here are 3 ways we can show our gratitude for the gift of freedom.

1. RECOGNIZE THE COST

“Freedom isn’t Free!”

A. Freedom cost the nation of Israel. Exodus 12:3-6.

B. Political freedom cost our forefathers & patriots.

1. The first colonists left their home to create a new nation!
2. The 56 men who signed the declaration of Independence, their conviction resulted in untold sufferings for themselves and their families. Of the 56 men:
 - 5 were captured by the British and tortured before death.
 - 12 had their homes ransacked and burned.
 - 2 lost their sons in the Revolutionary war.
 - Another 2 sons were captured.
 - 9 of the 56 fought and died in the war.

The price paid from Revolutionary War to Gulf War.

- Over 650,000 have died in battle.
- Another 242,000 have died as a result of injuries from war.
- 1,430,985 have been wounded in battle.

Our freedom was, and still is, being paid for by men and women willing to serve and die for this country if need be.

Freedom's Source

It's the soldier, not the campus organizer, who's given us freedom to demonstrate. It's the soldier, not the reporter, who's given us freedom of the press. It's the soldier, not the poet, who's given us freedom of speech. It's the soldier, who serves under the flag, who defends the protesters right to burn the flag. Isn't it time now to demonstrate that we support our troops? Were it not for the brave- there'd be no land of the free.

~ Author Unknown ~

C. Spiritual freedom cost our Heavenly Father.

1. Jesus left His home in heaven!

John 1:12 “*But as many have received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:*”

2. Our spiritual freedom cost God. God gave His only Son

John 3:16 “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*”

3. Jesus gave His life for us! He paid the penalty of sin for us.

Christ suffering the rejection of men.

The physical suffering of the cross; all of the mental, emotional and spiritual suffering of taking upon Himself the sin of the world.

It includes His suffering the rejection of His Father, and His suffering the full equivalent of hell for you and me so that we would never have to face the reality of hell ourselves.

Because of His sacrifice, salvation is offered to you as a free gift. **You can't buy it. You can't earn for it. All you can do is receive it.**

*This is the cost of spiritual freedom! Freedom is not free!
Death is the cost of freedom! Bloodshed is the cost of freedom!*

2. RESPOND TO THE SYMBOLS

"The Flag, The Pledge, and The Cross"

The Flag still stands for freedom. (Lee Greenwood song)

Sir Francis Scott Key in the defense of Fort McHenry on September 20, 1814 wrote the "*Star Spangled Banner*":

*Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
O say, does that Star - Spangled Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*

The Pledge of Allegiance.....by Red Skelton

I -- me, an individual, a committee of one.

Pledge -- dedicate all my worldly goods to give without self pity.

Allegiance -- my love and devotion.

To the flag -- our standard, Old Glory, a symbol of freedom. Where she waves, there is respect because your loyalty has given her a dignity that shouts freedom is everybody's job.

Of the United -- that means we have all come together.

States -- individual communities that have united into 50 great states. Fifty individual communities with pride and dignity and purpose, all divided with imaginary boundaries, yet united to common purpose, and that's for love of country.

Of America And to the Republic -- republic is a state in which sovereign power is invested in representatives chosen by the people to govern. And government is the people and it's from the people to the leaders, not from the leaders to the people.

For which it stands, one nation under God -- The nation, meaning "so blessed by God"

Indivisible -- incapable of being divided.

With liberty -- which is freedom and the right of power to live one's own life without threats or fears of some sort of retaliation.

And Justice -- the principle or quality of dealing fairly with others.

For all -- which means, ladies and gentlemen, it's as much your country as it is mine.

NOTE: *These words were spoken by the late Red Skelton on his television program as he related the story of his teacher, Mr. Laswell, who felt his students had come to think of the Pledge of Allegiance as merely something to recite in class each day.*

The Cross stands for freedom.

1. Only the blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient to purchase the redemption of the human soul.

Hebrews 9:22 *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

John 8:36 *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

2. Jesus stated purpose was to save us and set us free from sin.

Luke 4:18-19 *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

3. If it wasn't for His cross, we couldn't be free from sin.

4. We must respond to Jesus dying on the cross by receiving His payment for our sins.

Romans 10:9, 10, 13 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ...For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

3. REMEMBER OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

“With freedom comes a responsibilities.”

This is a quote from John F. Kennedy (from a speech that was never delivered, due to Kennedy’s death):

“We in this country, in this generation, are by destiny, rather than choice, the watchmen on the walls of world freedom. We ask therefore, that we may be worthy of our power and responsibility, that we may exercise our strength with wisdom and restraint, and that we may achieve in our time and for all time the ancient vision of peace on earth, goodwill toward men.”

A. Our civil duties.

1. Obey the law.

2. Pay our taxes.

The Bible says to give unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar and unto God what belongs to God.

a. Caesar wasn’t a moral leader.

b. The Roman Empire wasn’t a godly empire.

3. Pray for our government.

4. Vote.

5. Speak up when occasions demand it. Speak up like the following:

“America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great!”

-Alexis de Toqueville

B. Our Christian duties.

1. The Great Commandment.

Matthew 22:36-39 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

2. The Great Commission.

Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen..

Conclusion (H.A. Ironside, Illustrations of Bible Truth, Moody Press, 1945, pp. 60-61.)

John 15:13 - When nations are engaged in deadly strife, it is common for patriots to declare that he who gives his life for defense of his country may be certain of a home in heaven because of having made the supreme sacrifice. Patriotism is a virtue of which any man may well be proud. But patriotism, praiseworthy as it is from the human standpoint, will never fit the soul for the presence of God. It can never wash away the guilt of sin.

The testimony of **Edith Cavell**, the brave British nurse who was killed by the Germans during the WWI, is well worth considering in this connection.

This noble woman was born on December 4, 1865. She entered the London Hospital for nurses' training in 1895. From

Aug. 1914-Aug. 1915, Nurse Cavell helped to care for wounded French, Belgian, English and German soldiers alike. She ministered faithfully even to those who had fallen while fighting against her own nation. She aided many English and French soldiers who had fled from the Germans. When some of these fugitives were traced to her house in Brussels, she was immediately arrested and after a court-martial was sentenced to face a firing-squad. All her kindness to the German wounded was forgotten. Her captors considered her a spy and treated her accordingly.

Just before the bandage was placed over her eyes, as she stood fearlessly facing the soldiers who were about to take her life, she gave a last message to the world. "*I am glad,*" she said, "*to die for my country. But as I stand here I realize as never before that patriotism is not enough.*"

Then she went on to give a clear, definite testimony to her personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and her assurance of salvation, not through laying down her life for others, but because He laid down His life for her. In perfect composure, she submitted to the bandaging of her eyes and, in a few moments fell, pierced by many German bullets.

Her words, "**patriotism is not enough**" have spoken loudly in the years since she died a martyr to her convictions.

"*What more is needed?*" you may ask. The answer is "*Christ!*" It is through faith in Him alone that the soul is saved and heaven assured.

Free To Help, But Not To Hinder

Text - Galatians 5:1

Introduction: There is a great verse in the New Testament that is a blessing to all believers. It is Galatians 5:1 and it says, “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*”

Basically, this verse tells us that we are free from the bondage of the Law. As believers, we are not to allow ourselves to be forced to live under a set of rules devised by other men. This verse is a clear condemnation of legalism. Now, that is a good thing! It means that when we came to faith in Christ, we were set free, **John 8:36**.

No one has the right to impose his or her rules upon our lives. We are free to live for God as the Spirit of the Lord leads us. In other words, there is no place for legalism in the church of Jesus Christ. In Jesus we have perfect and absolute liberty.

What is Liberty?

Liberty has been defined as, “a. *The condition of being free from restriction or control.* b. *The right and power to act, believe, or express oneself in a manner of one's own choosing.*”

There are those who hear that and think that they have the right to live as they please. And, they are right, within reason. Here is what Paul said about the matter, “*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*”, **1 Cor. 6:12**.

Simply stated, Paul says that he can do anything he wants to do, but he is to avoid those things that have the potential to

control his life. This would refer to things like alcohol, drugs, and sexual addictions. In another passage he says this, “*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*”, **1 Cor. 10:23**. Again, Paul makes the statement that he can do anything he wants to do, but that he is to avoid those things that do not “*edify*”. This word means “*to build up or to promote growth in Christ.*” Paul’s idea is that we do have liberty and we can do anything we want to do, but that liberty is to be brought under the power of Jesus Christ. While we are free to live for the Lord, without the restrictions of the Law or of manmade rules and regulations, we are only free to do those things that build others up, or that do not take away our liberty.

This is the message Paul is trying to convey in these verses. He wants us to know that we are free, but that we have a duty to our fellow believer. As we live our lives, we are always have our brothers and sisters in our hearts.

We are to remember that we are either a stumbling block or a steppingstone to those around us. Which depends on how we live our lives before others. Again, in Galatians 5, Paul makes the following statement, “*For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*”, **Galatians 5:13-14**.

So, we can see that we are free in Jesus. Thank God that neither the Law, nor any rules made by men, have any authority over us. Praise God, we ought to rejoice in that liberty! However, at the same time, we must never forget that while we are free, our freedom is conditioned by how it impacts those around us. With that in mind, let’s turn our attention to these verses this evening and talk for a while about this thought, “Free To Help, But Not To Hinder.”

What is Legalism?

What really is “*legalism*”? It is the belief that I can become holy and please God by obeying laws. It is measuring spirituality by a list of *do*'s and *don*'ts.

The weakness of legalism is that it sees *sins* (plural) but not *sin* (the root of the trouble). It judges by the outward and not the inward. Furthermore, the legalist fails to understand the real purpose of God's Law and the relationship between Law and grace.

In my experience as a pastor, I have counseled many people who have suffered severe emotional and spiritual damage because they have tried to live holy lives on the basis of someone's high standard. I have seen the consequences of these attempts: *either the person becomes a pretender, or he suffers a complete collapse and abandons his desires for godly living*. I have seen too that many legalists are extremely hard on other people—critical, unloving, and unforgiving.

To be bound to man-made rules and tradition in order to obtain salvation or sanctification is called *legalism*. “*Legalism*” has no pity on people. *Legalism* makes my opinion your burden, my judgment your boundary, and my belief your obligation.”

- *Legalism* is not simply the keeping of rules; rather legalism is a wrong attitude about keeping rules.
- *Legalism* exalts self, judges others and bases everything on performance.
- *Legalism* exalts the rules rather than wisdom and discernment.
- Let me give you some silly examples of some legalistic laws in our country.

Legalism is requiring something of people God Himself does not require. If you try to please God by keeping some list of *do's* and *don'ts*, you are out of touch with the true gospel of Jesus Christ. God accepts us by grace not works, by believing, not by achieving.

I. Our Christian Liberty Explained

- A. v. 14 Some Things Are Neutral
- B. v. 17 Some Things Are Spiritual
- C. v. 14, 22 Some Things Are Individual

II. Our Christian Liberty Exemplified

- A. v. 13,15 Compassionate Toward Our Brother
- B. v. 19 Contribute To Our Brother
- C. v. 21 Considerate Of Our Brother

III. Our Christian Liberty Examined

- A. v. 16, 18 We Are Examined Daily By Men
- B. v. 18-23 We Are Examined Divinely By God

Conclusion: It would be great if all of life were written out for us, if there were no doubtful areas, if there were no weak brothers to accommodate. That simply is not the case! As we go through this life, there will be many occasions when we will be called upon to make a choice about right and wrong. What we choose in those moments reveals the truth of the state of our hearts.

When we have come to the place where the Lord and the needs of others come before our own needs and desires, we have begun the process of maturing in the Lord. May the Lord help us to get there!

Free Indeed

Text - Galatians 2:11-14

Introduction: One pastor tells the story of a young man who once served in a strict church with Scandinavian roots. Being a rather forward-looking and creative young leader, he showed his youth group a missionary film. We're talking simple, safe, black-and-white-religious-oriented movie. The film projector hadn't been off an hour before a group of leaders in the church called him in and asked about what he had done. They asked, "Did you show the young people a film?" In all honesty he responded, "Well, yeah, I did." "We don't like that," they replied. Without trying to be argumentative, the youth worker reasoned, "Well, I remember that at the last missionary conference, our church showed slides." One of the church officers put up his hand signaling him to be quiet. Then with these words he emphatically explained the conflict, "If it's still, fine. If it moves, it's sin!" Folks, you can show slides but when they start moving you are getting into sin!

Many non-Christians see Christians as a bunch of narrow-minded do-gooders with long lists of do's and don'ts. Unfortunately, they have an accurate impression of many who claim to love Christ. There are some that feel it is their job to prescribe their list of rules to the rest of us. They want to tell us how to dress, how to wear our hair, what to watch, what to read, what music to listen to and how to live. The problem is they are promoting their list, not God's.

The Apostle Paul addresses this problem again and again in Galatians. False teachers were teaching the Galatian believers that in order to please God they had to be circumcised and keep all their interpretations of the rituals, rules and regulations of the OT. Paul teaches us that we are saved by God's grace, not our works, by believing, not achieving.

Religion gives us LEGALISM. It says, “Keep my rules. Follow my directions and just maybe if you are good enough, God will accept you.”

God gives us LIBERTY. Jesus said, “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (Jn.8:36).

It is easy to jettison our spiritual freedom and be caught up in legalistic religion. It happens all the time. It even happened to the Apostle Peter, one of the “pillars” of the church (2:9). Let’s examine three truths about our spiritual freedom.

I. Spiritual Freedom is Exciting

- A. Peter Went to Antioch.
- B. Peter Ate with the Gentile Believers.

II. Spiritual Freedom is Frightening

- A. Some Jews Came Up from Jerusalem.
- B. Peter Withdrew Himself from the Gentiles.
- C. Peter Feared for His Reputation.
- D. Peter Caused Others to Stumble.
- E. Exercising Your Spiritual Freedom is Risky.

III. Spiritual Freedom is Heightening (raises our level of understanding)

- A. Paul Withstood Peter Face to Face.
- B. Paul Stood for the Truth of the Gospel.
- C. Three Enemies of Spiritual Freedom.

Enemy #1: Fear. Peter’s fear of what the Jewish Christians might think, say or do kept him from fully exercising his spiritual freedom and caused him to lead others astray. Fear is out of sync with the gospel. 2 Tim.1:7, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound

mind.” Prov.29:25 says, “The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.”

Enemy #2: Hypocrisy. The words “*hypocrite*” and “hypocrisy” in v.13 refer to an actor who wears a mask. He pretends to be someone or something he is not. Peter pretended to believe in the Jewish dietary laws when in his heart he did not. Hypocrisy is always based in insecurity.

Enemy #3: Legalism. In a manner of speaking, Paul said to Peter, “*Actions speak louder than words.* When you as an apostle stopped fellowshiping with the Gentile believers because of dietary laws, you took Barnabas and the other Jews with you. Now the Gentiles think they are not real Christians unless they become Jews.”

Legalism doesn’t work anyway. Most of the people who want to enforce their list of rules on others often don’t even keep their own rules.

The Liberty We Have In Christ

Text: Galatians 5:1

Introduction: Galatians has been called “*The Magna Carta Of Christian Liberty*”; “*Magna Carta*” refers to...

- *The royal charter of political rights given to rebellious English barons by King John in 1215 - **Word Web***
- *A document or piece of legislation that serves as a guarantee of basic rights. - **Dictionary.com***

The reason it has been called this is because of Paul's discussion regarding “*bondage*”...

- a. In connection with the meeting in Jerusalem - **Gal. 2:4-5**
- b. In arguing that we are justified by faith in Christ, not works of the Law - **Gal. 4:3-5,9,24-25**
- c. With his climax found in the text - **Gal. 5:1**

[The liberty we have in Christ is indeed precious, and it is essential that we stand fast in it. Yet exactly what does that liberty involve?]

I. Freedom From The Law Of Moses...

- A. Paul's primary concern in this epistle - cf. Gal. 2:16
- B. He expounds this in the first four chapters-Gal. 3:23-25
- C. Concerning which he wrote elsewhere - Rom. 7:4-6 -

Christ has delivered the Jews from their obligation to keep the Law of Moses

II. Freedom From The Bondage Of Sin...

- A. Writing of being "*justified*", Paul refers to being "*not guilty*" of sin - cf. Gal. 2:16-17
- B. Concerning which he wrote elsewhere - Rom. 8:1-2
- C. Jesus also spoke of the deliverance from bondage of sin - Jn. 8:31-34

Christ has delivered all men from the guilt and power of sin

III. Freedom From The Traditions Of Men...

- A. Paul wrote of this in chapter four - Gal. 4:9-11
- B. Also in his writing to the Colossians - Col. 2:20-23
- C. Jesus spoke of the danger of human traditions - Mt. 15:3-9

Christ has delivered us from the need to keep human traditions

IV. Freedom From Works Of The Flesh...

- A. Paul will have much more to say about the works of the flesh - Gal. 5:13,17,19-21; 6:8
- B. As he warned against in writing to the Corinthians - 1 Cor. 6:9-11
- C. About which Jesus also warned - Mk. 7:20-23

Christ offers deliverance from deeds of the flesh which endanger our salvation

Our Statue Of Liberty

Text - Galatians 6:14

Introduction: The Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor has greeted generations of newcomers to the shores of the United States. The Statue of Liberty was presented to the United States as a gift from France in recognition of 100 years of liberty, as well as commemorating the alliance of France and the U.S. in the fight for freedom.

This 152 Foot figure stands on top of a 150 foot pedestal, and was shipped to the U.S. in 241 crates in 1885, and was erected, and dedicated in 1886.

It was renovated just before its 100th anniversary in 1986, and reopened with a great celebration.

Many eyes have looked to this Statue over the past 100+ years from boats, and automobiles, airplanes, and trains with a sense of awe, not so much by the statue itself, but by what the statue represents.

In 1976, Neil Enloe of the Couriers wrote a song that compared the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor to our Statue of Liberty, the Cross of Jesus Christ. This song won the 1976 Dove Award for the Song of the Year.

*“Oh, the cross is my statue of liberty,
For it was there that my soul was set free!
Unashamed I’ll proclaim that a rugged cross
Is my statue of liberty.”*

What is Liberty?

The state of a free person; exemption from subjection to the will of another claiming ownership of the person or services;

freedom; - opposed to slavery, serfdom, bondage, or subjection.

All of the blessings we enjoy as Christians could not have taken place without our Statue of Liberty, and our Savior who bled and died on it. We are going to look at three aspects of this Liberty today, and they are:

1. The Monument of Liberty
2. The Message of Liberty
3. The Mystery of Liberty

I. The Monument Of Liberty

As you know, in the Old Testament when important events took place in the lives of the people, a monument would be erected for the benefit of generations to follow who would ask the significance of the monument.

Joshua 4:4-7 *“Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.”*

The Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor inspires questions from children to their parents as to the meaning of the Lady with the Torch held to the Sky.

Parents and Grandparents alike are able to tell the story in the best way they know how, but usually there is the instilling of an appreciation into the child of the high price that was paid for the liberty we now enjoy.

A different monument towers over history much higher, and casting it's influence much farther by offering freedom to spiritually enslaved people from every nation, and it is the Cross of Calvary.

This light shines much brighter, because the One who was on the Cross said He was "the Light of the World" - He is the light for red, yellow, black, and white, every nation, every tribe, and every background!

Far from being a scene that would draw the viewer in to inspiration and awe at it's beauty, but when one stops to consider the message of the Cross of freedom from sin, and when one hears the cry of "It Is Finished" echoing through the ages, the Cross is a monument of beauty!

Words like "Father Forgive Them, they know not what they do", speaks of the unconditional love of Christ even though he was reviled and rejected by those He loved.

I would venture to say that this nation would be able to survive without the Statue of Liberty, but I do not believe that our nation can survive without the Cross!

Through attack after attack on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we realize today that the Cross of Jesus Christ continues to stand strong in the hearts and lives of millions of Americans and people around the World.

It may not be visible to the human eye, as far as the actual cross goes, (good thing too, because it would become an object of worship, instead of the Christ who died on it,) but we

can see the effects of those who look to the Cross, as the one who was bound to alcohol has found a new drink! The one who was a slave to sin, is now a slave to Jesus Christ, and loving every minute of it!

When we are in need of healing or Salvation, we can look to the Cross, and the work that took place there for us.

In this age of “political correctness” be sure not to shy away from the Cross of Jesus Christ! It is still the Cross that is our Statue of Liberty -

While taking a prisoner from a Guelph, Ontario, correctional center to be arraigned on charges of attempted armed robbery, police constable John Bolton noticed a cross around the neck of the convict. Knowing the man was not religious, he took a closer look. The prisoner attempted to conceal something protruding from the top of the cross. When questioned, he said it was a good luck charm designed to look like a spoon for sniffing cocaine. But Constable Bolton was sure it looked like a handcuff key. By experimentation he found that the protrusion would open most handcuffs. The discovery led to the exposure of an attempt by prisoners in the correctional center to make a number of these cross-keys.

There is a cross that sets men free, free from the bondage of the law, and that cross is the cross of Calvary. Unfortunately many are more concerned about freedom for the body than they are about freedom for the soul. Whether inside or outside prison, all men need the cross that sets us free.

II. The Message Of Liberty

Every day, the Statue of Liberty stands and preaches a message. No, it's not out loud, but there is a message that is inscribed on it that says:

On the inscription there is a portion of it that goes like this:

*“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

I don't know about you, but when I read a statement like that, it makes me rejoice to be able to say that I was born in the greatest country in the World, and am a Citizen of that Country as well simply by being born here.

This message has brought hope to lives that have suffered in communist countries for their faith, or just the right to protest the injustices of a tyrannical government.

Years ago, in the uprising at Tiananmen Square in China, many people paid with their lives just to feel a taste of liberty.

But the message of the Statue of Liberty says “Give me your tired, poor, huddled masses yearning to breathe free!”

What a powerful message! Many upon seeing the Statue of Liberty have been moved to openly weep as their emotions overwhelm them as they see the Lamp lifted beside the golden door.

But I believe today that there is a more powerful message that came from the Old Rugged Cross and the perfect, sinless, man who hung there.

Not freedom just from physical bondage, but a message of freedom that goes deeper than that: Father Forgive Them

Luke 4:18 *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,”*

The Cross is all about a message of Freedom from the captivity of sin, and slavery that has held the sinner in it's grasp!

Basically, the message of the cross says as well to the world, *“Give me your tired, poor, huddled masses yearning to breathe free!”*

Come on out of the polluted sin-filled atmosphere of the world, and breathe deeply the clean air that God has to offer!

Job 33:4 *“The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”*

So now, we have this breath given to us by God, and a new freedom that we never had before, what are we supposed to do now? What is our primary purpose? How do we find fulfillment, and use the breath that He has breathed upon us?

Psalms 150:6 *“Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.”*

This message is a life-giving message! It is a message of freedom and liberty! It is a message that when fully realized will lead one to shouts of praise and worship!

Our problem is that we often take our freedom for granted!

It seems by reading the message on the Statue of Liberty, it's about receiving the poor, rejected, huddled masses. Of course,

anyone is welcome, but it must be proclaimed that all are welcome.

I'm here to say today that the Cross gives the same message, only it goes deeper than that! There are no custom borders to go through, no green card applications, no tests to take... Just a clear confession of faith in Jesus Christ, and the forgiveness that he so freely gave at Calvary! Actually, when it comes to the Kingdom of Christ, there are no *illegal* aliens! While all are welcome, they still must go through the proper entrance into the Kingdom, and it is the door of Jesus Christ.

John 10:9 *“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”*

When we do that, we become citizens of a greater country, and of a city whose builder and maker is God! What a gift! What a liberty! What a Mystery!??

III. The Mystery Of Liberty

What is it about liberty that causes great men to give their lives in battle? Why would someone fight for something they in fact will never enjoy on their own?

The sacrifices of those who are fighting now, and have fought in wars of the past are simply an amazing thing, and at times, even a mystery. We could ask many of our veterans to venture an explanation of this mystery, and many of them would come back and say to us, “it’s all about others!” It’s about the liberty of others, the freedom of others, and I am willing to die to bring this freedom to others!

Many of us may not know for sure who said these words...

“Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?” but we know Patrick Henry who

followed up with the words "*I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death.*"

Colossians 4:3 "*Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*"

Amazing! What is it about this mystery that would cause a man like Paul to risk his life, his religious reputation in the community of that day to follow Jesus Christ, preaching about the mystery of the Gospel, and willing to go to rat infested prisons, and even to give his very life as he was eventually beheaded by Nero in Rome?

The "*mystery*" of Christ is the Good News of Salvation! That God should love a sinner such as I, although it meant his death on Calvary, nor rest till he had planned to bring me nigh, how wonderful is love like this!" It is no "*unsolved mystery*" today.

Colossians 1:26-27 "*Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*"

The false teachers in the Colossian church believed that spiritual perfection was a secret and hidden plan that only a few privileged people could discover. Their secret plan was meant to be exclusive. Paul said that he was proclaiming the word of God in its fullness, not just a part of the plan. He also called God's plan a "*mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations,*" not in the sense that only a few would understand, but because it was hidden until Christ came.

Through Christ it was made open to all. God's secret plan is "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*"—God planned to have his Son, Jesus Christ, live in the hearts of all who believe in

him—even Gentiles like the Colossians. Do you know Christ? He is not hidden if you will come to him.

You will never experience the true freedom of Christ in your life until you accept by Faith what He did for you on the Cross of Calvary.

In 1863 the *Emancipation Proclamation* was proclaimed in America. The word spread from Capitol Hill down into the valleys of Virginia, and the Carolinas, and evens into the plantations of Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama. The headlines read, 'Slavery Legally Abolished!' However, the greater majority of slaves, in the South, went right on living as though there had been no emancipation. They went on living like they had never been set free. In fact, when one Alabama slave was asked what he thought of the Great Emancipator, whose proclamation had gone into effect, he replied "I don't know nothing about Abraham Lincoln except they say he set us free. And, I don't know nothing about that neither." How tragic. A war was being fought. A document had been signed. Slaves were legally set free.

Yet most continued to live out their years without knowing anything about it. They had chosen to remain slaves, though they were legally free. Even though emancipated, they kept serving the same master throughout their lives. Yet, so it is with many believers today. They have been set free, yet they have chosen to remain slaves to the same strongholds that have gripped them all of their life.

Have you been to your Statue of Liberty?

John 8:34 *“Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.”*

John 8:36 *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”*

Facts About the Statue of Liberty

What materials make up the Statue of Liberty?

The Statue of Liberty is made of copper $\frac{3}{32}$ in. thick, the same as two American pennies placed together. The internal structure is comprised of cast iron and stainless steel.

Why is the Statue green?

The Statue's copper has naturally oxidized to form the outer patina, or green, coating. Upon completion in 1886, the Statue of Liberty was more of a traditional brown color, like an American penny. It took about thirty years for the Statue of Liberty to fully oxidize and form the patina.

How tall is the Statue of Liberty?

The Statue is 305ft. 1in. from the ground to the tip of the flame. It is the equivalent height of a 22-story building and was the tallest structure in New York in 1886.

Why is the Statue of Liberty a woman?

Classical images of Liberty are often depicted in a female form. The Statue of Liberty was modeled after the Roman Goddess of Liberty.

Which direction does the Statue face?

The Statue of Liberty was placed inside the existing Fort Wood and faces southeast. The Statue's position makes it a welcoming symbol for arriving ships.

Does the Statue of Liberty ever get struck by lightning?

Yes! As one of the tallest structures in the New York Harbor, the Statue of Liberty does get struck by lightning. The Statue is grounded through the massive concrete and granite pedestal.

How many Torches have there been on the Statue?

The Statue's current torch, added in 1986, is a copper flame covered in 24K gold. It is reflective of the sun's rays in daytime and lighted by floodlights at night. The original torch was removed in 1984 and is now a display piece inside the Pedestal lobby.

What does the torch represent?

The torch is a symbol of enlightenment. The Statue's official name represents its most important symbol, "*Liberty Enlightening the World.*"

What is written on the Statue's tablet?

The tablet in the Statue's left hand has the date of American Independence: *July 4, 1776*. The date is written in Roman numerals and reads July IV MDCCLXXVI.

What does the Statue wear on her head?

The Statue of Liberty wears a crown, or diadem.

What are the spikes on the crown?

Many believe the seven spikes are rays of light representing the seven seas and seven continents of the world.

Where on the Statue are the broken chains located and what do the chains mean?

The broken chains are near the Statue's feet and are not visible from the ground level. Many believe the chains represent breaking free from tyranny and servitude.

Christian Liberty

Text: Galatians 5:1

Introduction: The term “*Christian liberty*,” is used very loosely among modern Christians. Sad to say, some see this as a *license to do as one pleases*. With many their hearts are better than their heads: their lives superior to their creeds. To the popular mind *Law* and *liberty* are opposing terms. Many of the Lord’s own children are being taught that any legal rules or restrictions are incompatible with true Christian liberty, and this in the face of the words of our Saviour — “*teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*” (Matt. 28:20).

Christian Liberty means many things:

1. Deliverance From the Wrath of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 “*And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*”

2. Deliverance From the Power of Death and the Devil.

Hebrews 2:14-15 “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*”

3. Deliverance From the Bondage of Sin

Romans 6:17-18 “*But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of*

doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

4. Deliverance From the Authority of Man

Galatians 5:1 “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

Colossians 2:16-18 “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,”

5. Deliverance Unto the Service of God

Romans 6:17-18 “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

Romans 6:20-22 “For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

God Bless America Again

Text: Proverbs 14:34; Mark 12:17

Introduction: Our founding fathers were convinced that the Psalmist was right when he wrote in **Psalm 33:12**, “*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord . . .*” Practically everything that happened in our nation’s history was based upon deep religious convictions.

Our founding fathers went to their knees time and time again, seeking insight and wisdom from God for decisions they had to make. We must never take for granted the price these men paid to protect our freedom. Let’s notice:

I. AMERICA’S PAST HISTORY — Prov. 14:34

“Righteousness exalteth a nation”

- A. Her Foundation Was Of God
- B. Her Faith Was In God
- C. Her Families Around God
- D. Her Freedom Enjoyed Because Of God

II. AMERICA’S PRESENT CONDITION — Prov. 14:34

“Sin is a reproach to any people”

- A. Her Sinful Condition
- B. Her Spiritual Condition
- C. Her Satisfied Condition

III. AMERICA’S PREVAILING FUTURE — Mk. 12:17

“Render unto God”

- A. Her People
- B. Her Praying
- C. Her Preaching
- D. Her Peace

Being a Christian-American

Text: I Peter 2:11-15

Introduction: We are living in a "hyphenated" country....
Examples: *African - American, Arab - American, Asian - American, European - American, Latin - American, Native - American., Chinese - American, English - American, Filipino - American, German - American, Greek - American, Cuban - American, Irish - American, Italian - American, Japanese - American, Jewish - American, Korean - American, Mexican - American, Polish - American*, and so on.

How about this one? ***Christian-American!!***

- A Christian-American still pledges allegiance to the flag!
- A Christian-American still sings the Star-spangled Banner!
- A Christian-American still waves Old Glory!
- A Christian-American still respects our nation!
- A Christian-American still loves America!

As Peter wrote to the Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire some 2,000 years ago, he advised them on how they were to live out their **dual roles:**

- As Residents In An **Earthly** Country
- As Citizens Of An **Heavenly** Kingdom

By studying Peter's advice to the believers in his day, we learn some important truths for our lives as American's today.

1. Our Link With This Country (Vs. 11)

A. We Are Strangers

"sojourners"...we are here but we don't fit in with the culture..."*things about this culture I don't like*"... I love South

Georgia but there are a lot of things in this culture I can't stand, i.e. redneck drinking, immodesty, stupidity, etc.

We are not suitable citizens of this country because we have a more suitable citizenship in Heaven, **Phil. 3:20** *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:....* **Example:** If we moved to a foreign country, we could make it but the whole culture would not really fit us (we would be “*alien residents*”).

B. We Are Pilgrims

"pilgrims"...America, the *"melting pot"*....as many came in time past to settle this nation but we, as believers, are staying only for a time in this foreign land. I'm headed somewhere, not here to stay...

2. Our Living In This Country (Vs. 11-12)

A. We Should Hold Back

“abstain from fleshly lusts”...hold it back, bridle it back, controlled...

Webster's 1828 Dictionary...*In a general sense, to forbear, or refrain from, voluntarily; but used chiefly to denote a restraint upon the passions or appetites; to refrain from indulgence.*

Example: Olympic athletes *"abstain"*, *"hold back"* on their appetites so they can win the prize! There are to be some things we just ought not do, we should abstain from these *"fleshly lusts"* and have good conduct different from the world.

How do we make the choices of what to : *“abstain from”*...for me it started with seeing my family do things years ago that I thought was bad and I quit without even being a Christian, I just thought it was stupid, bad, etc. As a Christian, we allow

the Holy Spirit to make these choices for us, not our pastor, friends, etc....pray and ask God about it!

B. We Should Be Honest

“your conversation honest among the Gentiles”

"honest"...beautiful, good (literally or morally), i.e. valuable or virtuous (for appearance or use).....rate yourself in "beauty" or "looks" as you look to the world around you. Do you remember your Momma or Granny saying, “Don't be ugly?”

3. Our Legal Responsibility To This Country (Vs. 13-15)

A. Respect the Law

“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man”

"legal", "Ain't wrong unless you get caught"...not to be the attitude of a Christian-American.

B. Represent the Lord

“For so is the will of God, ...”

People see us, not Christ, but it is God's will that we submit and follow the Law as long as it does not violate God's Word so we can best represent the Lord to a lost world!

1 Peter 2:15 *For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.....(muzzle the mouth of the world)*

Because of sin and spiritual indifference, *America the Beautiful* is becoming *America the Pitiful*. It is time that God's people repent, and determine that to live for Christ in the midst of a wicked and wasteful society.

The Only Way God Can Bless America

Text: Proverbs 14:34

Introduction: “*God Bless America!*” That is something we pray, sing and say. It is also something that does not just happen naturally. It has a spiritual connotation. It requires the blessing, the intervention, and the hand of God Himself. There is a path for America to follow to obtain this blessing. If we want to be blessed, we have to meet God’s conditions.

We still say the pledge of allegiance, including the words “*under God*”, with real American pride. We are all extremely appreciative and indebted to every person that now serves, or has served in our country’s military.

We take seriously the freedoms that I enjoy as an American. We recognize those freedoms have been bought and paid for by the sacrifice of many brave soldiers. While we love my nation, and desperately want God to bless her, we are not so simple minded as to think that America is currently in any condition to receive God’s favor and blessing.

The truth is that right now, the continued blessing of God upon America is very unlikely. Regardless of how many people call upon God to bless us, it will not happen unless we meet God’s requirements.

One pastor says, “*While people reject the God of Scripture as their Sovereign, they still claim Him as their servant. For some people, that is all they mean by ‘God bless America’.*” (John MacArthur)

We must realize is that *God is not our servant*. We are supposed to be His servants. Just asking or telling Him to bless America in no way means that He will.

In Proverbs chapter 14, we find a passage that reveals to us what brings about the blessings of God upon a nation. Solomon writes, “*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*”

Three truths we can see here, and by God’s grace, may we *no longer ask God to bless what we are doing, but may we do what God is blessing*. Notice:

I. The Depravity Of Our Nation

- A. The Abundance of Sin in America
- B. The Acceptance of Sin in America

II. The Danger To Our Nation

- A. Where Sin Leaves a Nation
- B. Where Sin Leads a People

III. The Deliverance For Our Nation

- A. How Righteousness is Revealed
- B. How Righteousness is Received

Do we want God to bless this great land again? Do we want revival to sweep from “*sea to shining sea*” and purge away the filth and stench of sin?

If we want God to bless our nation, then we must open our mouths and declare with boldness that there is no salvation apart from Jesus, “*for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*” (Acts 4:12)

Proclaim Liberty

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

I. OUR LIMITATION:

• No good thing in us other than Christ • **Rom. 7:18** *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:..*

II. OUR DETERMINATION:

• One message: Christ and Him crucified • **Gal. 6:14** *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

III. OUR TREPIDATION:

• Weakness, fear, and trembling • **2 Cor. 7:15** *And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.*

IV. OUR DEMONSTRATION:

• In Spirit and Power • **Acts 1:8** *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: ...*

V. OUR ASPIRATION:

• That your faith should be in God not man • **1 Cor. 2:13** *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; ...*

• **Leviticus 25:10** is engraved on the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia "*Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land*"

Hope For Our Nation

Text: 2 Chronicles 7:14

Introduction: What an awesome verse with an awesome promise to us from an Awesome God.

We are a part of the greatest land on the face of the earth. From the coast of California to the Coasts of the Carolinas you will find some of the most beautiful land that can be found anywhere in the world. So, *geographically* we are in good shape, but *spiritually* speaking we have gone backward rather than forward. What can we do? Where is the hope for our nation? It is in properly responding to **2 Chronicles 7:14**.

I. Our Part

A. Humble Ourselves- The Bible says, “...*for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*” (1 Pet. 5:5). The truly humble person realizes where God has brought him or her from, and adjusts their attitude accordingly. The Bible says, **Proverbs 16:18** “*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*” A “*haughty spirit*” is a lofty and arrogant frame of mind. It is the opposite of humility and trust.

B. Pray- We go to God in faith, asking Him to give us mercy from the judgment we deserve. If you read the previous verses leading up to 2 Chron. 7:14, the judgment of God was about to fall upon the people of Israel for their sins. Remember Abraham’s prayer over Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.18). Prayer can hold back the judgment of God on a nation.

C. Seek My Face- The *face* indicates approval or disapproval. As a needy people, we should be so living our lives that we will have the approval of God upon our lives and our nation. If we seek the Lord He can be found (Isa.55:6). **Amos 5:6** “*Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; ...*”

D. Turn From Wicked Ways- We should turn from our wicked ways, our acts and attitudes that have offended God, and return to the God we have resisted or rebelled against. Sin is the biggest problem America faces today—the sins of greed, of pride, of lust, of waste, etc.

II. God's Part

A. He Will Hear Us - Sin hinders our prayers, Psa. 66:18. However, when sin is taken care of, prayer can flow unrestricted to and from the throne of God! There is no more powerful force in the world than an unhindered prayer life! Why? Because it has the ear of God and is used by Him to accomplish His will upon the earth. Note: Luke 11:2.

B. He Will Help Us - God promises to "*forgive our sins*". This means that not only is the prayer line restored, but it means that we can be in close fellowship with Him. Nothing in this world compares with being able to have close communion with God Almighty! We have a sin forgiving God.

C. He Will Heal Us - This great verse was given to the nation of Israel. They were warned that their sins would be answered by the Lord through drought. This would devastate their land and their population. However, the Lord's promise to them is that repentance equals rain. If they will honor Him, He will honor them! If they will open their hearts, He will in turn open the heavens. In a sense, we are in the same situation today. Our homes, communities and nation have been devastated through a drought of spiritual blessings and power.

If God's children will come back to Him in true repentance and faith, we will see our nation impacted for and by the glory of God. We need that kind of hope for our nation!.

