

July, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at Gilead Bible Church,

What does it mean to be free?

As this country celebrates the 4th of July or Independence Day, we are reminded that it is a day to commemorate the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, declaring independence from Great Britain. It meant that our country declared that she want to be free from the tyranny of Great Britain and be free to exist and function on its own. The second sentence of the Declaration of Independence sums it up the best, "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."¹



Sadly, this celebration of freedom for our country has gradually turned into opportunities to deviate from the moral standard established by our Creator. It is the essence of today's human rights movement. The pivotal point was the decision of the Supreme Court in 1973 in Roe vs. Wade that gave a woman's right to have an abortion. From that decision, the freedom to choose became more important than any moral standard.

On the other hand, there is another perspective of freedom for the Christian. Paul in Galatians 5:1 says, "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." Another words, as Christians, Christ's life, death, and resurrection had one purpose – to give freedom.

First, we are free from the consequences of sin. The consequence of sin is death. Every time we attend a funeral, we are reminded of the reality of death. Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 15:56-57, "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Second, we are free from the conduct of sin. That's why in Galatians 5, Paul continues in verse 13, "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh..." The evidence of the *abuse of our freedom* is verses 19-21, "The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the

like..." So, what should we do? Paul in verse 16, "So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."

The evidence of the *abiding our freedom* through Jesus Christ is Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control..."

May we as *citizens of this country* celebrate the 4th of July, Independence Day, and treasure our freedom from the tyranny of our enemies. May we as *citizens of the kingdom of God* treasure our freedom in Christ from the tyranny of our enemy, Satan.

God Bless,

Pastor David and Helen Moy

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence

2011年7月

親愛的基列聖經教會弟兄姊妹。

自由的意義是什麼？



當全國在慶祝7月4日獨立日,我們想起1776年7月4日我們的國家在這一天通過了獨立宣言正式脫離英國而獨立自主. 在獨立宣言中的第二句概括了全文的精髓:

「我們認為這些真理是不辯自明的:人人生而平等,造物主賦予他們若干不可割讓的權利,其中包括生命、自由和追求幸福的權利。」

可悲的是在這國家慶祝自由之際,已逐步偏離我們造物主所建立的道德標準。它亦是今日的人權運動的基奠。關鍵點是在1973年當最高法院裁決給予婦女有權墮胎。從而這個判決導致自由選擇變得比任何道德標準更加重要。

另一方面保羅在加拉太書5章1節說:“基督釋放了我們,叫我們得以自由。所以要站立得穩,不要再被奴僕的軛挾制。”這是另一角度去看基督徒的自由。換句話說,作為基督徒,基督的生命,死亡以及復活是只有一個目的 - 就是給與自由。首先,我們要擺脫罪的後果。罪的後果是死,每次在我們參加葬禮都提醒了我們死亡的真實,保羅在哥林多前書15章56,57節說:“死的毒鉤就是罪,罪的權勢就是律法。感謝神,使我們藉著我們的主耶穌基督得勝。”

第二,我們要擺脫罪的行為。在加拉太書5章,保羅繼續在第13節說“弟兄們,你們蒙召是要得自由,只是不可將你們的自由當作放縱情慾的機會...”,我們濫用自由的證明是在19-21節,“情慾的事都是顯而易見的,就如姦淫、污穢、邪蕩、拜偶像、邪術、仇恨、爭競、忌恨、惱怒、結黨、分爭、異端、嫉妒;醉酒、荒宴等類...”。所以,我們應該怎樣做?保羅在16節說,“我說,你們當順著聖靈而行,就不放縱肉體的情慾了。”通過耶穌基督去遵守我們的自由的證據就是在加拉太書5章22,23節,“聖靈所結的果子,就是仁愛、喜樂、和平、忍耐、恩慈、良善、信實、溫柔、節制...。”

願我們作為這個國家的公民在慶祝7月4日,獨立日,要珍惜從那脫離我們敵人的暴政而得來的自由。願我們作為神國的公民珍惜從那脫離我們的敵人,撒旦而得到在基督裡的自由。

上帝祝福
梅牧師及師母