

**Pastor Paul Bawden  
Grace Evangelical Church  
Sunday, November 15, 2009  
"God – True Freedom"**

**Isaiah 46:9-10; 40:13, Ephesians 1:11; John 8:32; Galatians 5:1**

I remember finishing up exams when I was in school. Yes, school was done for the year. I didn't have to study in a structured setting for awhile. What a feeling it was to be free from the school schedule. Perhaps you have had those feelings as well.

Then I think of the freedoms you and I enjoy in this country. The freedom to worship like we are doing this morning. The freedom to own property and possessions., to have our own bank accounts, to buy and sell, to go where we please and live where we want. We are a blessed people, a blessed nation.

Of course, some today, sad to say, don't think that we should have these kinds of freedoms. They think that government should dictate the kind of life-style we should live. They feel that those with governmental powers know more than the people. In fact, they would like to take away the very freedoms that we enjoy and have been won for us through the blood and sacrifice of those who laid down their lives for our freedom.

Freedom. May we never take for granted our freedoms that we have in our beloved United States of America.

What is freedom anyway? Where does freedom come from? And what does freedom have to do with us in our daily lives?

Let's start this way.

## **I. A definition of freedom.**

### **1. Webster gives this definition of freedom.**

**"The absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action."**

Then it adds "a release from restraint or compulsion." Meaning that a person was under some restraint but was released from that particular restriction - Such as release from slavery or restraint, or from the power of another.

**Liberty is another word used to describe freedom.** Liberty implies the power to choose what one does or says as distinguished from lack of inhibition in doing or saying.

**Freedom, then, is the ability to make a choice or carry out an action without coercion or restraint, including as well the release from some restraint or compulsion.**

### **2. The biblical definition of freedom.**

#### **Old Testament –**

**Word for freedom has the idea of release.**

#### **New Testament –**

**Word used for freedom means unrestricted, unfettered, not under the domination of.**

Again, basically, the same idea of having the ability to make a choice or carry out an action without any coercion, restraint, or restriction.

**Freedom is a wonderful word. Something for which we are all thankful as we come into the Thanksgiving season.**

**But who is the source of this kind of freedom?**

## II. The source of true freedom.

### 1. Is man the true source of freedom?

#### (1) Man's ability.

Certainly God has given mankind incredible intelligence and skill. His dexterity and creativity are phenomenal. His desire to sacrifice for others, and fight for our freedoms is most commendable and honorable, which is what Veterans' Day was all about this past week – Honoring those who served so valiantly and sacrificially. But in all of man's accomplishments and knowledge, it is impossible for him to be the source of freedom. **He is limited in knowledge and ability.**

#### (2) Man's Condition.

What do we display in our lives? We display selfishness, words that depreciate others, actions that display envy, and jealousy. Man can display hatred in his heart toward others, to such an extent at times that he murders people. **Rather than being a source of freedom, man is bound to the very thoughts, attitudes, and actions which display that it is impossible for him to be the source of freedom.**

That is why the Bible doesn't hold back any words, when it says **that the heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked, who can understand it (Jeremiah 17:9).**

**And why Jesus made it clear in Mark 7:21-23** that "from within out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

**That's why Jesus also taught in John 8:34**, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin."

**Romans 6:17** talks about being "slaves to sin." **Ephesians 2:1**, "You were dead in trespasses and sins."

**Man, then, with all of his ability and learning, can't be the source of freedom although he can seek to maintain the freedom given. He is limited, certainly as a created being, but he is also bound to the very sins that he commits.**

**Which means we need to ask . . .**

### 2. Is God the true source of freedom?

#### (1) Will any god do?

Obviously such can't be the case, for gods available in our world today, are basically concocted by man or have something of the Bible mixed in with man's ideas. Such gods fall far short of being eternal, personal, with all power, all knowledge, and being all present, as well as being holy and just.

#### (2) The biblical God?

This means that the biblical God is the only one and true God as the true source of freedom.

#### 1. Scriptural Teaching.

That's why the biblical God said through the prophet Isaiah, **"For I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done" (the biblical God is the one and only God).**

**But then notice the next part of these verses,**

**Saying 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'" (Isaiah 46:9-10).**

**That's why the biblical God said through Isaiah, "Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has informed Him?" (Isaiah 40:13).**

That's why the God guides Paul to write in Ephesians 1:11, "According to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will."

## 2. Explanation.

What do these verses tell us about God's freedom?

Notice the words, "I will accomplish," (Isaiah 46:10).

"Who has directed?" (Isaiah 40:13).

"After the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11).

### **\*\*God's will.**

The biblical God has a will that can make decisions and act. Of course God also has a mind (He is omniscient) and emotion.

### **\*\*God's will acts in freedom.**

Since God has a will, He can act in freedom (liberty) in and of Himself, obligated to no one but Himself. As the only true and eternal God, the biblical God has the authority in Himself to have the liberty to act without being answerable to anyone else.

### **\*\*God's Freedom is displayed in His will.**

What we see here, when we start considering the biblical God as the source of true freedom, is that God's freedom is displayed as He wills to make decisions.

### **\*\*God's freedom and His will are vitally are a part of each other.**

God wills because HE has the freedom in Himself to do so. His freedom is evidenced as He accomplishes His good pleasure, working out all things after the counsel of His will.

### **\*\*God's will and His freedom are unlimited – eternal.**

Of course, God, in His will, is unlimited in His ability to make and act on decisions, which means God is unlimited in His freedom to act as well, meaning God's freedom is eternal.

### **\*\*God's freedom is consistent with all of His other attributes.**

All of God's decisions to act in freedom are always consistent with His holiness, justice, and love. God is always balanced in His attributes, always true to HIMSELF.

This means that the biblical God will never do anything that reflects negatively on the freedom He possesses in carrying out His will. That's why James tells us that God can't be tempted (or solicited by evil), neither does He tempt anyone (or solicit anyone to evil) (James 1:13).

Such is not in God's holy character to do so. God's freedom to will and act is always consistent with His holiness, justice, and love.

**How, then, does the biblical God act in His eternal freedom?**

## **III. The biblical God acts in His will with true freedom.**

Since the biblical God has the freedom to act in and of Himself obligated to no one else, how does the biblical God act in the freedom He possesses?

### **1. In the Godhead true freedom is exercised.**

By that I mean is there evidence of eternal freedom in the relationship of God, the Father, God, the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – the relationship of the Trinity – one God existing as three persons?

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have a perfect relationship in the Godhead. The Father loves the Son (John 5:20;15:9) and the Son loves the Father (John 15 10), for He kept His Father's commandments. The Holy Spirit, the Helper would be sent by Christ and proceed from the Father (John 15:26), and would glorify Christ. True freedom is very apparent.

Obviously, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had an eternal and harmonious relationship as they existed eternally in the God head, and it was there that the plan for the world and the redemption for the world was established (Ephesians 1:1-14). **This was all accomplished in the will and freedom of the Godhead before the foundation of the world in their freedom which was to be put into fact according to the purpose of the Godhead.**

## **2. God wills to become involved in humanity.**

### **(1) As Creator.**

The biblical God wills, then, in His freedom to create the world and Adam and Eve. Christ from Colossians 1 was the agent of creation.

**In creating the world He obligates Himself to become involved in His creation to sustain it and to move it to its conclusion.**

In creating Adam and Eve with physical bodies, God also created them with minds, emotions, and wills, like His (not God), so that they could communicate with God with their minds, love God, and serve God. At the same time, they could communicate with one another, and as husband and wife, have a family and enjoy and serve one another.

**God gave them the privilege to have the freedom to be what He created them to be – those who would subdue the earth by keeping Him first in their lives, enjoying their relationship – by serving Him.**

### **(2) As Father.**

The only stipulation to their freedom was that Adam and Eve were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil lest they die. As their heavenly Father, God was seeking to develop their trust and faith in Him. **Yes, God, as their heavenly Father was seeking to develop their freedom, so they would know that freedom meant that He must have first place in their lives.**

### **(3) As Judge & Savior.**

Satan knowing this, came and tempted Eve and Adam, and they disobeyed God and followed the lead of Satan to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

**What were the dynamics here? Satan was telling Adam and Eve that they were really being restricted by God – He was taking away their freedom by telling them they shouldn't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for they would really be like God if they ate of that tree.**

**This is what Satan continues to do in our society today and many have bought into the lie that following the biblical God restricts one's behavior, so I'll do what I want. Of course dire consequences result – jealousy, idolatry, break up of families, immorality, venereal disease, and corruption of all sorts.**

Such brought God's judgment in different ways upon Satan, Adam and Eve, and the earth, with the promise of the Redeemer (Genesis 3:15). Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden of Eden, although God had forgiven them in the killing of the animals, the shedding of blood (without the shedding of blood, no remission – looking forward here to Christ), and clothing them with the skins of the animals

**They lost their creaturely innocence, and lost the wonderful freedom that God had given them in the beautiful Garden of Delight.**

### **(4) As Teacher.**

But there were **two eternal principles** about freedom being taught to Adam and Eve and still to all of us today, and we will develop it more as we go along.

**(1) True Freedom comes by obeying the true and living, personal, and eternal creator God.**

**(2) On the other hand, if the biblical, eternal, creator God is rejected, true freedom will be lost, which brings slavery to sin in spiritual separation from God and eventual physical death.**

**These two principles start in Genesis 2 & 3 and run through the Book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible.**

**The evolutionary theory, resulting in the idolatry and immorality present in our society today are here due to the rejection of the biblical God as Creator and Savior. Man has lost his true freedom because He has turned his back on the biblical God. That freedom was lost in the Garden of Eden many years ago. That's why the promise of the Redeemer was given in Genesis 3:15.**

As God continues to become more involved in the world through various biblical characters such as Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the nation of Israel, and the different prophets, we have this theme getting more pronounced as time goes by: "Someone Is Coming!" Yes, "SOMEONE Significant Is Coming!" Finally that SOMEONE arrives.

#### **IV. God culminates His ultimate will in the freedom of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.**

##### **1. The promised Redeemer of Genesis 3:15 had arrived on planet earth.**

He was of the seed of David and of Abraham, yes, the seed of Adam. He was part of the human race, having physical flesh, but He was also God, His goings were from everlasting, and His name was called Emmanuel, God with us.

##### **2. Christ in His ministry declared that He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that no one could come to the Father but through Him (John 14:6).**

##### **3. He said that He came not to be served but to serve and give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).**

##### **4. He really got to the religious leaders when He started talking to them about being sinners and of their father the devil. In fact they took up stones to stone Him at the end of the conversation (John 8:31-58).**

Come with me to that passage for we find why God culminates His ultimate will in the freedom of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Verse 31** – Jesus was speaking to the Jews who had believed in Him, "If you abide in my word, then you are truly disciples of Mine."

**Verse 32** – And you will know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"

**Verse 33** – They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free?'"

**Verse 34** – Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

**Verse 35** – (Jesus continues) – The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.

**Verse 36** – So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

Then Jesus goes on to tell the Jews that even though He knows they are of Abraham's seed, yet they seek to kill Him because His word is not in them. Jesus explains to them that if they knew the God of Abraham, they would love Him. Since they are just physical descendants of Abraham and not spiritual descendants, that is have the faith of Abraham, they are really of their father the devil, who is a murderer from the beginning. There is no truth in him. The Jews become really angry at Christ as he exposes their unbelief and sin, and eventually when Christ tells them that he was before Abraham, He is the I AM. They take up stones to stone Him, for they will not recognize that Christ is God and came from His heavenly Father.

##### **5. Jesus presents Himself as the ONE who can set a person free from his or her slavery to sin.**

## What's Jesus doing here?

He is exposing the sinful hearts of Pharisees. In so doing, Jesus tells them who He is, THE TRUTH, and what He can do for their slavery to sin. He can set them FREE from their slavery to sin.

It's interesting here that Jesus doesn't talk about political freedom for Israel. He doesn't talk about economic or educational freedom. He doesn't even talk about the environment, or social freedom.

Rather, Jesus talks about being a slave to sin. Jesus is saying that the Pharisees greatest problem is a spiritual problem, slavery to sin – meaning they have missed God's mark of holiness, But He can set them free from sin's awful grip on their lives, which will give them true fellowship with the true and living eternal biblical God.

Yes, since Jesus is the TRUTH, ultimate eternal reality, He has the freedom in Himself in His will to set people free from the penalty of sin which is death, provide power over sin in one's life, and eventually deliver one from the very presence of sin. **If the Son sets a person free, he will be free indeed.**

## 6. Jesus Christ can set people free from their sin based upon His death, burial, and bodily resurrection.

That's why Jesus kept telling His disciples that he came not to be served but to serve and give His life a ransom for many. That's why He kept telling His disciples some three times that He must go to Jerusalem where He would suffer, die and rise again the third day.

### How was that accomplished?

Jesus became obedient unto death even the death of the cross. Jesus who had unlimited freedom in Himself, submitted Himself (willed to submit) to the Father's will to represent you and me, being our sin bearer, to pay the penalty for our breaking God's law which is death, by dying on the cross, being buried, and rising bodily from the grave to demonstrate that God's wrath of judgment had been satisfied, the price for redemption had been paid, and forgiveness of sins was available to all.

It's why Peter after Jesus resurrection and ascension preached forgiveness of sin through the bodily resurrected Christ. It's why Paul talked about the gospel being that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again bodily from the grave.

**God willed that through Jesus Christ's death, burial and bodily resurrection there would be true freedom from sin.**

**Having true freedom in Himself Christ obeyed His heavenly Father and won forgiveness before God for us.**

- ∞ **Adam was led to believe that true freedom was not obeying (rejecting) God. Adam brought sin into our lives and the world.**
- ∞ **Christ, the second Adam – the God-man, believed that true freedom was obeying God, and won for us forgiveness of sin, freedom from the penalty of sin, having power over sin in our lives, and eventually being delivered from the very presence of sin.**

## V. We can experience the freedom that Christ has won for us on the cross through the open tomb.

### 1. Recognize what Christ has done for us (His great love for us).

Christ willed in His freedom to take upon Himself humanity to come earth and be made sin for us who knew no sin. He was willing to give up the insignia of His majesty, His glory, for awhile on earth to provide deliverance for us who are enslaved to sin. In one sense, Jesus became a slave to provide us deliverance from the slave market of sin – to redeem us from the penalty of sin which is death, to satisfy God's justice, and to win reconciliation for us before God so we would no longer have to be an enemy of God, but we could become His friends through faith.

## 2. Understand our position before God.

Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees that they were sinners needing to be set free from the slave market of sin. Their sin which came from Adam separated them from God. They didn't like being called sinners by Jesus Christ. Who did He think He was. When Jesus said that he was the I AM, they took up stones to stone Him.

The words sin or sinner are not in our popular vocabulary. We are all victims, rather than being responsible for our actions.

**God tells us that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23). Yes, we are born into sin, born sinners. We don't become sinners as we grow up. God is not putting us down, for He loved us while we were yet sinners. He is just pointing out to us the ultimate problem in each of our lives, so we can see the solution He has provide in His Son, the TRUTH, who has come to set us free from the penalty, the power, and eventually the presence of sin.**

One can never fully recognize what Jesus has done for a person, until one realizes that sin has caused a great gulf between God and us, separated us spiritually from God, and eventually one will die physically.

## 3. Reach out by faith and accept Christ as personal Savior.

As many as received Him to them gave He the authority to become the children of God, even to those who believe on His name (John1:12). They that call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13). For by grace are you saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8)

God wills to offer us the freedom from sin that He provides us His Son who is Freedom personified. It is our choice to accept God's eternal gift of forgiveness of sin and eternal life in Christ – freedom from sin's penalty, overcoming power of sin in our life, and eventually being delivered from the very presence of sin.

## 4. Realize what we have in Christ.

**Accepting Christ as personal Savior, the believer needs to realize what he or she has in Christ.**

### (1) The believer is free from the penalty of sin eternally.

**That is what redemption is all about – the penalty of sin has been paid for eternally. Paid in full where Jesus' words on the cross. (Ephesians 1:7).**

### (2) The believer is no longer in the slave market of sin but in God's eternal kingdom (Colossians1:13-14). He has an entirely new spiritual domain to live in.

**Not in the kingdom of darkness any more, but in the kingdom of God's eternal light, His church, members of one another.**

### (3) The believer is a partaker of the very nature –life of God (II Peter1:4).

**The believer is a partaker of the divine nature.**

### (4) Possessing the life of God – the believer now has a new mind, emotion, and will spiritually.

**That means, that the believer has the potential to will, to act out what God would think, say, and do.- to exemplify the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 6:13-23).**

### (5) The believer has been adopted in God's family as a mature son or daughter (Galatians 4:4-7)

The believer is no longer under the old law system which brings death, but now being in God's family the believer is an adopted son or daughter, which the privilege to be an heir of God and the responsibility to act maturely as a son or daughter of the Lord. He has direct access to his heavenly Father any time anywhere. He can all Him ABBA FATHER, Papa.

### (6) The believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, who seals His salvation, and the Holy Spirit gives the believer the power to live pleasing to the Lord (Galatians 4:6).

Living in Christ's freedom can't be done in one's own strength, if so, it would be done in the flesh with no glory to God. It would wood, hay, and stubble.

## 5. Live in the freedom Christ has given us.

### (1) The Positive (Galatians 5:1, 13).

"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of bondage."

How does one continually keep standing firm (present imperative) in Christ's freedom?

#### Note Galatians 5:13 –

"For you were called to freedom, brethren, only do not turn your freedom into an occasion for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

#### How does the freedom of Christ express itself in love in our lives?

### (1) Know what the word of God says (Use the new will to understand God's word by the illumination of the Holy Spirit).

Look at I Corinthians 13 as it describes Christ's love

Christ's love is patient.

Christ's love is kind (meaning Christ's love is also forgiving as He forgives us).

Christ's love is not jealous.

Christ's love is not boastful or proud or rude.

Christ's love does not demand its own way (not selfish).

Christ's love is not irritable.

Christ's love keeps no record of when it has been wronged.

Christ's love is never glad about injustice but rejoices when the truth wins out.

Christ's love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Christ's love will last forever (New Living Translation).

#### In fact loving like Christ is the fulfilling of the law of God (Galatians 5:14).

### (2) Do what the word of God says (Use the new will to put into practice God's teachings).

Put into practice, into the shoe leather of our lives God's love.

Keep standing firm in God's freedom. Here's how that happens!

It's easy to talk about loving like Christ. It's quite another matter to do it. I have talked quite awhile about staining our deck. I need to do that. But this past Monday, I quit talking about it and stained the deck, which needed it badly especially the floor. God expects action on our part, not just to be hearers of the Word of God but doers of the Word as James tells us.

### (3) Depend on the Holy Spirit – basically obeying Him, living in the freedom of Christ, so that Christ will be seen in us and God will be glorified (Galatians 5:16).

"Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, the old sinful nature" (Galatians 5:16).

We need to depend on the Holy Spirit to help us live in Christ's freedom of showing His love to others individually, in our families, in our church family, at work, at school, and in our neighborhoods.

In that process, we need to be aware of the negative that can happen.

### (2) Beware of the negative that can occur in our lives (Galatians 5:13, 15, 19-21).

When we don't obey the indwelling Holy Spirit to love like Christ in the Spirit's power, we display the characteristics of disobedience to God, of living in slavery to the old sin nature – such as strife, jealousy, anger, envying, yes, all kinds of selfishness. We don't operate in the freedom we have in Christ.

Falling into sinful attitudes and actions, we need to confess those immediately to the Lord. Claim His forgiveness and move on. If need be ask someone else's forgiveness as well. We need to get back enjoying our fellowship with the Lord and living in His freedom.

**Here is a summary of what we have considered today. It goes way back to what we said God was teaching Adam and Eve in the Garden before they disobeyed the Lord. I will amplify the teaching because we now have the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the completed Bible.**

**(1) True eternal freedom is knowing Jesus Christ as personal Savior, being free from the penalty of sin, then, having victory over the power of sin by obeying the Holy Spirit as revealed in His Word by loving like Christ for His glory, with the promise some day of being delivered from the very presence of sin.**

**(2) Rejecting the biblical God brings the consequence to the individual of being in slavery to sin, a false freedom, bound for eternal separation from God.**

**Every conscientious parent recognizes** how difficult it is to exercise his God-given authority over his children. The delicate balance of being tough yet tender is not easy to maintain. Many parents intensify a rebellious spirit by being dictatorial and harsh. Others yield when their authority is tested. When a strong-willed child resists, the pressure to give in for the sake of peace and harmony can become overpowering. I am reminded of the mother who wanted to have the last word but couldn't handle the hassle that resulted whenever she said "no" to her young son. After an especially trying day, she finally flung up her hands and shouted, "All right, Billy, do whatever you want! Now let me see you disobey THAT!"

I trust we are grateful that God never throws up His hands to us and says, "**Do whatever you want. Now let me see you disobey THAT!**"

**No, the Lord keeps prodding us on to obey Him for He knows that's where true freedom in Him is – doing His will.**

**Roger Staubach, a great quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys,** admitted that his position as a quarterback who didn't call his own signals was a source of trial for him. Coach Landry sent in every play. He told Roger when to pass, when to run and only in emergency situations could he change the play (and he had better be right!). Even though Roger considered coach Landry to have a "genius mind" when it came to football strategy, pride said that he should be able to run his own team.

**Roger later said, "I faced up to the issue of obedience. Once I learned to obey there was harmony, fulfillment, and victory."**

**It's the same with the Lord. Obeying Him we have true freedom with harmony, fulfillment, and victory.**

**Let's this week enjoy living in the eternal freedom of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit!**

