

**LIVE  
FREE!**

# LIVE FREE!

March 18, 2012

**Sermon in a sentence:** True freedom comes through total surrender to Jesus Christ and joyful obedience to His Word.

**Scriptures:** Rom. 8:1-5; John 8:31-36; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; Rom. 6:16-22; Gal. 5:1; Josh. 24:15

Romans 8:1-5 (NASB) Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

In our world today, there is a great cry for freedom: freedom from all the restraints that are placed upon our ability to do as we please. This is a cry for individual autonomy, the ability to make choices according to our own will, to be free from the tyranny of rules and regulations imposed upon us by others: parents, teachers, governments, the church etc.

People express this desire for freedom in various ways – rebellion against authority, passive resistance, insurrection, guerilla warfare, political upheaval, social action, sub-cultures and counter-cultures of various kinds.

Conceptually these may seem like viable options, and in theory we may say every individual *should* have the right to do as he or she pleases. However, in real life, this is totally unworkable. We cannot simply live as we please, if we desire to be at peace and live in harmony with our family members, co-workers, neighbours, fellow citizens, teammates, or brothers and sisters in Christ.

Thirty years ago on March 29<sup>th</sup> the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was enacted, becoming an integral part of the Constitution of Canada. Please pay close attention to the first sentence of the Charter along with its first two paragraphs:

“Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the **supremacy of God** and the **rule of law**:

*Guarantee of Rights and Freedoms*

1. The Canadian Charter of Rights and **Freedoms** guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it **subject only to** such reasonable limits prescribed by **law** as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

*Fundamental Freedoms*

2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

(a) freedom of conscience and religion;

(b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;

(c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and

(d) freedom of association.”

**Of course, as Christians, we heartily embrace the very first clause in the preamble that recognizes “the supremacy of God” as the foundational platform of Canada’s freedom Charter! Following close behind is the fact that this freedom we enjoy is only possible through of the rule of law!**

**This statement may be difficult to comprehend in the abstract, so let us look first to the word of God and then at a couple of examples to illustrate the point.**

**John 8:31-36 (NASB) So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." 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?'" 34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. 35 "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. 36 "So **if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.****

**Or we may paraphrase:**

**“So Mr. Trudeau was saying to those Canadians who had elected him, “If you continue to believe my word and vote for me, I will be eternally grateful to you, and I will give you a Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Charter will make you free... and if the Charter makes you free, you will be free indeed!”**

**Yes, it may sound a little strange, but that is exactly what the Charter is trying to guarantee – freedom for all, through adherence to the rule of law. It works much better this way.**

**I can guarantee you do not want to live in a world without law where every individual has the right to do whatever he or she pleases, whenever and however they want to do it. This would be an unlivable situation called anarchy: (a state of disorder due to absence or non- recognition of authority: literally – “without ruler”). To avoid this, our society has laws and lawyers, judges and prosecutors, policemen and soldiers to ensure appropriate, mutually beneficial freedoms for all, through the rule of law.**

**In the church world, we utilize pastors, teachers, elders, church boards and General Conferences to interpret, apply and even enforce the laws of God for the benefit of the body of Christ.**

**The game of football (soccer in North America) has been described as the “beautiful game”. There are famous names associated with this game like Pele, Ronaldo, Cristiano Ronaldo, Ronaldinho, Maradona, David Beckham, Raul, Kaka, and many others. These are all brilliant practitioners of the game and it is all made possible because of strict rules, and referees to enforce the rules.**

- **You have to play ‘in bounds’.**
- **You can touch the ball with any part of your body except your hands.**
- **You have to be ‘on-side’ when your teammate passes to you, or the play is stopped.**
- **If there is an illegal tackle, you get a free kick, or in certain circumstances, a penalty shot.**
- **If you are really blatant with a bad tackle, you may be shown a yellow card. Do it again and you’ll be shown a red card, expelled from the game and suspended from the next game.**
- **There can only be eleven players on the field per side, and if one of your teammates is red-carded, the team plays shorthanded the rest of the game.**

- And of course, you are not allowed to impede the progress of an opposing player by holding him or tripping him.

Are those enough rules for now? Rules and referees. Rules and referees. Such a restrictive game, isn't it! Yet it is described as "beautiful"!

Yet, precisely *because* of these rules and regulations, (plus many others I don't even know about), these premier players have a stage on which to work their magic with total freedom! They know they won't be held, kicked, punched or impeded by the opposing players, and if they are, they know the referees and linesmen are right there to make things right. Freedom to excel in soccer only comes through strict adherence to the rules of the game.

So it is in the kingdom of God. **Our success as Christians and our ability to soar and prosper in the things of God only comes through the freedom of obedience to His word and to those He has appointed to lead us and interpret His laws - to us and for us.** We are therefore free and safe.

1 Peter 2:13-17 (NASB) Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. 15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. 16 **Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.** 17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

There are those who have deceitfully impersonated doctors and hurt a lot of people because they have had absolutely no training in the medicine arts. Our society arrests such people and puts them in jail, and very negative public sentiments are aroused when stories like

these surface. But why should anyone be upset if this is a free country and we are able to do as we please? Why can't I simply hang my shingle outside my front door and advertise myself as Dr. McKenzie, General Surgeon? ("Come see me for your quadruple bypass heart surgery. Cheapest rates in town! Casket sales on the second floor.")

It all boils down to this: real freedom comes through the rule of law. You can be free to live in sin through the law of sin and death, or free to live for God as bond-slaves of Jesus Christ, which leads to everlasting life.

Romans 6:16-22 (NASB) Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, **you are slaves of the one whom you obey**, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms because **of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.** 20 **For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.** 21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22 **But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.**

The better option by far is to live free – in Christ!

Galatians 5:1 (NASB) **It was for freedom that Christ set us free;** therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

But the choice is totally yours. *You* decide the kind of freedom you want to have.

Just remember that freedom isn't free, and it can only be enjoyed through our willing adherence to law.

Joshua 24:15 (NASB) "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, **choose for yourselves today whom you will serve**: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

**Choruses:**

He That The Son Has Set Free (F)

Free-dom, Free-dom (no more shackles, no more chains,  
no more bondage, I am free) (F)

I Am Free, Praise The Lord I'm Free (F)