

FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

by Gary Hutchens

How many times have you heard the statement, "Freedom isn't free!"? It's a statement meant to impress upon us the fact that the freedoms associated with living in this country, freedoms we hold so dear, did not come cheap. Those freedoms cost the dedication, commitment and a great many lives of people who went before us to secure and insure them, not only for themselves but also for all of us who have come along later.

The freedoms we enjoy in this land of ours should never be taken lightly. Just observe some man or woman who's missing a leg but still determined to live an effective and independent life, and consider the strong possibility that their leg was lost serving their country. Also consider that it would only take this generation's complacency to lose all of those freedoms that we take for granted as we wake up each morning.

Far more profound and important is the freedom that God offers us from the guilt of our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus promised that, if we will obey and live by the gospel message He brought from the throne room of Heaven, we will be freed from the condemnation of our sins: "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32).

The freedom that Jesus offers us is freedom from sin. "But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22). In the text of that chapter the apostle Paul spoke of the hold ("dominion") that sin has on so many (vs. 14). He described the servitude to sin so many people experience in their lives as being like shackles of slavery (vs. 16). But we don't have to remain slaves to sin; we can be "set free" (vs. 18).

The awfulness of remaining under sin's dominion is not just the depravity that naturally goes with a sinful lifestyle. It's the eternal consequence of never choosing to come out of that bondage. That consequence is eternal "death!" (vs. 23). James also wrote of this reality: "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death" (Jas. 1:14-15).

Jesus came to this earth with the key to the shackles. He gives us the opportunity to be set free from the dominion, guilt and ultimate consequence of our sin. We can be forgiven as we are baptized into Him (Acts 2:38; 22:16). But the freedom that Jesus offers us is not free. He paid the price for our freedom from sin with his life on the cross. He literally tasted death for us (Heb. 2:9). His life was "offered" as the perfect sacrifice for our sins (Heb. 9:28). He bore our guilt in His body as He hung on that cross (2 Cor. 5:21).

Don't ever take lightly the freedom God offers from the guilt of your sin, freedom bought and paid for by your Savior. Considering the price paid, you should count that freedom all the more precious. No, freedom isn't free!

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A man's worst difficulties begin when he is able to do as he likes.

Thomas H. Huxley (1825 - 1895)

News & Notes

TODAY'S CONTRIBUTION: Will be sent to the Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort in Nashville. Give cheerfully and generously.

BIBLE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS: Questions that were submitted will be answered **this evening and each last Sunday evening of each quarter** (depending on interest).

CONGRATULATIONS: To **Hunter Robinson** on his recent graduation from Southern Local High School and Eastern Gateway Community College. He plans to continue his academic and football career at Geneva College.

MEN'S BREAKFAST: Next **Saturday, July 6th, 8:00 a.m.** at Coplin's in Newell.

COVERED DISH DINNER: Next **Sunday, July 7th, about Noon** at the Fellowship Building, followed by our **early afternoon worship service at 2:00 p.m.** at the church building.

SUMMER BIBLE CAMP: **July 8-13** at Tomlinson Run State Park. Registration packets available.

RECOGNITION DAY: **Saturday, July 13th, 2-4 p.m.** at the Southern Hills Church of Christ. Tributes to **Bro. Buck Groves** and in memory of **Bro. Sam Burdine**. Speakers: Will Montgomery and Rico Brown. Additional details on the bulletin board.

CONVERT'S CLASS: Resumes **Thursday, July 18th at 11:00 a.m.**

PANTRY: Toilet paper.

ADDRESS: **Brenda Harris**, 102 Cardinal Dr., Rockwell, NC 28138. Brenda is a sister to our Gerald Clutter, Debbie Waite, and Paula Clutter. Brenda is undergoing treatments for cancer.

REMEMBER THESE SICK & SHUT-IN: At Home: Docie Moore, Linda Parkes, Becky McKitrick, Zachary Guidy (Tim Martin's grandson), Dean Spencer, Peggy Linger, Claudette Miller, Nancy Cox, Barbara DeLong, Cheryl Renfro Walker, Lori Stocks (Karen Strum's niece). **Fox - Chester:** Audrey Geer (Linda Hall's mother), Janice Hutchins, Mary Johnson. **Elsewhere:** **Carol Williams** (Sharon Sprout's mother), 104 N. Clayton, Carlsbad, NM 88220. **Herman McHan**, 7401 Elmwood Dr., Lisbon, OH 44432.

