

GALATIANS 5:13-15

SERVE ONE ANOTHER

“You were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.”¹

The tragedy of modern worship is that worshippers tend to serve themselves rather than serving one another. We seek out a church based on what it can give us, rather than seeking out a congregation where we may honour God by investing the gifts that He has entrusted to us. Moreover, this service to self is conducted largely in the absence of sound instruction and without benefit of training provided from the pulpit. In fact, we preachers are guilty of encouraging such self-serving attitudes among the members of the church.

I acknowledge that in making this charge I am painting with quite a broad brush; nevertheless, the assessment does generally appear to hold true among the churches of our Lord. I am assuredly grateful for every pastor who boldly declares the Word while pointing listeners to life in the Beloved Son. However, such courageous preaching appears to be increasingly rare. Likely, this deficit finds its roots in the exaggerated self-love that characterises modern life. Contemporary church-goers are generally so focused on fulfilling their own desires that they have scant time to serve one another in love. In fact, one has to question whether modern Christians know the meaning of the apostolic admonition delivered to the Galatian saints, “through love serve one another.”

Perhaps that assessment appears overly critical to many who listen today. However, ask yourself, when was the last time you were genuinely excited at the thought that you would be serving your fellow worshippers as you prepared to attend the worship of the congregation? When did you last enter the House of the Lord asking yourself what you could give, rather than thinking of what you might receive? When did your emotions last overwhelm you at the thought that you were permitted to serve another, and especially that you might be called to serve someone whom many would consider your social inferior?

Our language betrays us. We exit the worship and say, “I didn’t get anything out of that,” or we say, “That didn’t feed me.” If the service was stimulating, we may be more positive and say, “That really ministered to me.” **We** are the centre of our worship—not the Master. I remind the people of God that worship is not about what we receive; it is about what we give. Worship is not about whether we are present; rather, worship is about Who we meet. This contemporary attitude of putting self at the centre of worship is killing the contemporary church.

Too often, we go to church, rather than being the church. Worship too frequently refers to singing, or even dancing, rather than awareness that we have entered into in the presence of the True and Living God. We feel almost compelled to focus more on the liturgy than on the relationship. We are content to say prayers rather than praying. Tragically, few Christians appear able, much less willing, to define such terms as “worship” or “prayer” through appeal to Scripture. The Apostle to the Gentiles would argue that we were saved in order to be set free—free to know God and to be known by God.

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FREEDOM IS GOD’S GIFT TO HIS OWN — In the opening verse of this chapter, Paul informs us, “For freedom Christ has set us free” [**GALATIANS 5:1**]. Now, this truth is magnified as he asserts, “You were called to freedom, brothers” [**GALATIANS 5:13**]. Robert Allen Zimmerman (Bob Dylan) was quite accurate when he sang,

“You’re gonna’ have to serve somebody, yes indeed
You’re gonna’ have to serve somebody,
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you’re gonna’ have to serve somebody.”²

Ultimately, every individual either serves the True and Living God, or she serves the enemy.

Let’s explore that subject somewhat more fully. Challenged by religious leaders, Jesus responded by saying, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” [**JOHN 8:34-36**]. The Master had just introduced a concept to which these leaders would have undoubtedly given assent. However, they would have imagined that they were as pure as the driven snow because of their religion.

Underscore in your mind that each person serves either God or the devil. Though many, perhaps most, of our fellow Canadians would argue that they serve their own interests, if those interests do not advance the glory of God, it ultimately advances the cause of wickedness. Let me demonstrate this fact by referring you to a truth which Paul wrote concerning each believer. “The heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world” [**GALATIANS 4:1-3**].

Later, in this same portion of the letter, Paul reminded his readers of their former status. “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more” [**GALATIANS 4:8, 9**]? The description applies to each one who listens today. We are either enslaved to our own passions and desires, or we know God.

At another point in his service, the Apostle penned a letter to Titus, encouraging him to stay at the hard task of evangelising and discipling. One of the truths he reminded Titus to remember was this: “We ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another” [**TITUS 3:3**].

Just because an individual is religious does not mean that they are not enslaved by their own sinful passions. In his second letter to the Christians living in the Diaspora, Peter made a serious charge of people whom he identified as “false teachers.” He equates these false teachers to “false prophets” that were once evident among the People of Israel. False teachers and false prophets are one and the same. Motivated by an insatiable appetite for wickedness, they seem not only to revel in their own wilful sin, but they are intent on drawing others to share in their evil. Listen as I read what Peter has written of them. You will find the passage in your Bible at **2 PETER 2:10-22**.

² Bob Dylan, “Gotta Serve Somebody,” ©1979 by Special Rider Music

“Bold and willful, [false prophets and false teachers] do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet’s madness.

“These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: ‘The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.’”

Jesus came with a powerful message of hope for all who are enslaved by sin.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

[LUKE 4:18, 19]

Good news is proclaimed for the poor. Liberty is proclaimed for captives. The blind are given sight and those who are oppressed are set at liberty. This is the message of the Faith to this age! Liberty! Freedom! However, this freedom is only when we have enslaved ourselves to Christ.

For you who have confessed the Master through your obedience in baptism, what did you say in that action? The Apostle to the Gentiles reminds us of what we said through our obedience in these words. “We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” **[ROMANS 6:6-11]**. We testified that we are no longer enslaved to sin! We confessed freedom in Christ the Lord.

Paul follows up that thought by emphasising our voluntary servitude, our willing indenturing to the Son of God. These are the words of the Apostle, written to instruct the faithful. “Thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

“For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” [**ROMANS 6:17-23**].

Throughout the Word of God are practical applications of this truth. We are free in Christ, though we are not free to do as we wish. We are free to be all that God created us to be, but that freedom comes as we place ourselves under the reign of the Son of God. Therefore, Peter writes, “Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God” [**1 PETER 2:16**].

In a similar manner, James speaks of the Law of Liberty, which is the Word of God. He writes, “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing” [**JAMES 1:22-25**].

Again, James urges all who are followers of the Risen Son of God, “So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty” [**JAMES 2:12**]. In Christ, there is freedom. Thus, we are informed, “The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” [**2 CORINTHIANS 3:17**].

It would be difficult to explore fully all the implications of this freedom we enjoy. Assuredly, we who are born from above are free from all condemnation—God does not condemn us, nor should we accept condemnation from others who speak without thinking. What else can Paul’s words written to the Romans mean? “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” [**ROMANS 8:31-39**].

If divine condemnation is absent, neither is there guilt. Truth compels us to confess that we are sinners; however, we are confident that we are sinners saved by grace. Though we may grieve over sins committed in the past, and though we undoubtedly bear the scars resulting from our wicked past, we know that we no longer stand guilty before the True and Living God. Though looking forward to the resurrection, this point is reflected in through the Apostle's affirmation: "This perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’
‘O death, where is your victory?’
O death, where is your sting?’

“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” [1 CORINTHIANS 15:53-57].

Though we await our transformation, now we who have believed are sons of God. Now we are set free to know God—to come before Him and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. I want to speak directly to any who struggle with the thought that they have not achieved all they had wished in life. Perhaps you are one who struggles with what you consider failure. We who are redeemed do not necessarily measure up to the standard of this dying world. Nevertheless, we are secure in the knowledge that we are not living for this world; rather, we live for the Kingdom of God which is surely coming. We exult in the knowledge that “Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself” [PHILIPPIANS 3:20, 21].

We will face some trials, but we keep on moving forward as we follow our Master and Saviour. We will meet opposition as we pursue righteousness, but we are assured that we have the victory in Christ the Lord. We will often be tempted to give up, but we will reach the golden shore. I haven't seen the Promised Land, but I have tasted the freedom Christ promised to His own. I haven't been to Heaven, but I know the way to my eternal home. I know I won't reach that eternal home on my own; I'll be carried over by the strength of the Living God.

Paul said, and I know it is true, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience” [ROMANS 8:18-25].

FREEDOM IMPOSES RESPONSIBILITY — We belong to a fallen race; consequently, we tend to distort all that God has given us for our benefit. Among the precious gifts He has given is freedom for those who know Him; and we distort that freedom to gratify our own fallen desires. However, we must bear in mind that freedom imposes responsibility to God and to God's people.

Freedom imposes responsibility to serve one another. Freedom reminds us that we are not isolated in the world. Freedom reminds us that we have purpose in remaining here until the Master returns. Freedom ensures that we glorify the Master. If freedom means anything, surely it means that I am responsible for the welfare of my fellow believers.

Listen to the Apostle as he deals with this issue when writing the Corinthian Christians in his first letter. The issue posed by these early Christians was food offered to an idol. Almost all the Corinthian Christians came to faith out of idolatry. They knew that all the meat sold in the marketplace was offered to the idols which were demigods to the guilds. These saints were truly converted; and thus, they were conscientious about former associations. In this respect, they were not unlike some of us. They had apparently asked a question concerning whether it was permissible for them to eat food offered to an idol. This is the way Paul answered the question.

“The question keeps coming up regarding meat that has been offered up to an idol: Should you attend meals where such meat is served, or not? We sometimes tend to think we know all we need to know to answer these kinds of questions—but sometimes our humble hearts can help us more than our proud minds. We never really know enough until we recognize that God alone knows it all.

“Some people say, quite rightly, that idols have no actual existence, that there’s nothing to them, that there is no God other than our one God, that no matter how many of these so-called gods are named and worshiped they still don’t add up to anything but a tall story. They say—again, quite rightly—that there is only one God the Father, that everything comes from him, and that he wants us to live for him. Also, they say that there is only one Master—Jesus the Messiah—and that everything is for his sake, including us. Yes. It’s true.

“In strict logic, then, nothing happened to the meat when it was offered up to an idol. It’s just like any other meat. I know that, and you know that. But knowing isn’t everything. If it becomes everything, some people end up as know-it-alls who treat others as know-nothings. Real knowledge isn’t that insensitive.

“We need to be sensitive to the fact that we’re not all at the same level of understanding in this. Some of you have spent your entire lives eating ‘idol meat,’ and are sure that there’s something bad in the meat that then becomes something bad inside of you. An imagination and conscience shaped under those conditions isn’t going to change overnight.

“But fortunately God doesn’t grade us on our diet. We’re neither commended when we clean our plate nor reprimanded when we just can’t stomach it. But God does care when you use your freedom carelessly in a way that leads a fellow believer still vulnerable to those old associations to be thrown off track.

“For instance, say you flaunt your freedom by going to a banquet thrown in honor of idols, where the main course is meat sacrificed to idols. Isn’t there great danger if someone still struggling over this issue, someone who looks up to you as knowledgeable and mature, sees you go into that banquet? The danger is that he will become terribly confused—maybe even to the point of getting mixed up himself in what his conscience tells him is wrong.

“Christ gave up his life for that person. Wouldn’t you at least be willing to give up going to dinner for him—because, as you say, it doesn’t really make any difference? But it does make a difference if you hurt your friend terribly, risking his eternal ruin! When you hurt your friend, you hurt Christ. A free meal here and there isn’t worth it at the cost of even one of these ‘weak ones.’ So, never go to these idol-tainted meals if there’s any chance it will trip up one of your brothers or sisters” [1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13].³

³ Eugene H. Peterson, **The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language** (NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO 2005)

We have a hard time relating to the struggles of these early Christians as they endeavoured to use their freedom in a responsible manner. In fact, I suspect that many of us are puzzled at the challenges they faced. Why would they write the Apostle about this particular matter? Why would they care about it? Perhaps the issue is that in too many instances we are not passionate about our relationship with the Master. We come into the Faith as though it were some sort of non-vital transaction; we treat conversion to Christ as a mere choice, much as whether we choose steak or roast for the main course. Consequently, we treat our relationship to His people in a casual manner—we can take them or leave them, depending on how we feel.

We aren't quite certain we can find a burning issue that divides the churches in this day. In my lifetime, the churches have at various times struggled with issues of freedom in worship style, freedom in musical selections, freedom in Bible translations used, freedom in dress for worship and freedom in a variety of other issues. I have witnessed churches divided over such serious matters as whether new instrumentation was to be an electric piano or a grand piano. Other churches have divided over whether panelling for the walls during remodelling was to be oak or walnut. Clarence Jordan grappled with that in the 1960s when he was preparing "The Cotton Patch Gospel." He addressed one of the burning issues of that day for Christians.

"Now about working on Sunday, we know that we all have been 'enlightened.' But 'enlightenment' is inflating, while love makes a man truly great. If someone thinks he knows it all, he hasn't begun to learn the first lesson. Yet if one really loves God, God then opens himself up to him. So back to this working on Sunday, we know that a day means nothing whatsoever, and that God alone really matters. Even though there are also many special days on both Catholic and Protestant calendars, such as those to saints and special events, still for us God alone is supreme, our Father, the source of all things. We are his, and so is the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, including ourselves. But not everybody has this insight. Some people, because of their traditional background, still think of working on Sunday as sinful, and their sense of right, limited as it is, is offended by it. Well, work of itself doesn't make us spiritually presentable. So if we don't work we're no worse off, and if we do work, we're no better off. Just be careful that in the exercise of this freedom you do not trip up your weaker brothers. For suppose one of them sees you, an enlightened man, working on Sunday, won't it be too much for his limited understanding and cause him, against his better judgment, to work too? In this way the weaker brother is torn apart by your enlightenment. And since he too is a brother for whom Christ died, when you sin against such brothers and offend their limited understanding, you also sin against Christ. That's why, if working on Sunday spiritually wounds my brother, I'll never work on Sunday as long as I live—but only to keep from spiritually wounding my brother" [1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13].⁴ Jordan was endeavouring to connect with people and not simply to translate what Paul wrote; he was seeking to express the struggle the Apostle was facing and not merely use his words in a modern context. He sought understanding so that those who would choose to live at Koinonia Farm could make an informed decision.

The underlying principle to carry away this day is that you really are free before the Lord. No one—no church, no preacher, no moral system—can steal your freedom; no one can impose bondage on you. You can—and you must—voluntarily accept restrictions on your freedoms to avoid wounding a fellow believer through the exercise of your freedom. In doing so, you are revealing the grace of God and you are ensuring that you build your fellow believer. In taking the initiative to hold your freedom in check, you reveal the grace of God at work in your life.

⁴ Clarence Jordan, **The Cotton Patch Gospel** (Smyth & Helwys Publishers, Macon, GA 2004)

FREEDOM CAN LEAD TO OUR DESTRUCTION — Responsibility is the side of freedom that is often neglected. The tendency for most of us is to avoid confronting that which is unpleasant or that which makes us uncomfortable. Perhaps we modern Christians hope that by avoiding discussion of such themes we will never be compelled to grapple with the hard choices that arise from such matters. Perhaps we have grown complacent. Or perhaps we pastors have failed to instruct the people in righteousness. However, our futile efforts are simply whistling past the graveyard.

Great nations have been destroyed because they did not realise that freedom could lead to destruction. The freedom to focus on personal pleasure destroyed the ability to better others as energies were expended on that which is frivolous and excessive. When a society took its eyes off the collective responsibility to make the nation stronger, focusing instead of personal comfort, the nation soon fell into ruin and chaos. When the people were more concerned with what they could get rather than with what they could give, the nation was destroyed. Similarly, great movements within Christendom have fallen into decay and ruin because those who participated in those great movements failed to realise the danger of unrestrained freedom. They were consumed with secondary issues that ultimately were of scant importance. The people went to church instead of being the church. The worship experience was graded on what they received rather than on what they gave to Him who was worshipped.

Paul cautions, “You were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.” Worship is a theme I’ve mentioned several times to this point in the message; and worship is vital to the health of this congregation, or of any congregation. Worship must be concerned with what we give and not with what we receive. Worship is not about us; worship is about Him. Freedom brings us into the House of God. However, if our purpose in coming before the Lord is to feel good about ourselves, we are distorting our freedom—in that case, our freedom has become an opportunity for the flesh. Can it actually be that much of contemporary worship is that and nothing more—an opportunity for the flesh?

In worship, we are given opportunity to equip ourselves so that we can serve others. Should we fail to serve one another, we are serving the flesh. To fail to invest ourselves in one another is to ensure that we serve ourselves. We who are believers are responsible to love one another earnestly [see **1 PETER 1:22; 4:8**]. Much of what we imagine to be love is mere emotion that evaporates as the dew before the early morning sun. We feel love for some, and feel nothing for most. You are the Body of Christ. Each of you who have faith in the Risen Son of God is gifted with unique gifts entrusted to your oversight so that others may be built up, encouraged and consoled. This truth must be emphasised frequently within the Body of Christ.

Let’s briefly explore this issue at a more personal level. Here are some questions to consider as a guide in pondering our service to the people of God. Do the trials of a fellow believer affect you? Does the sorrow another experiences at the death of a loved one have an impact in your life? Do you find yourself awakened in the night to pray for a fellow worshipper who is facing serious illness or even the spectre of death? Are you aware of the spiritual struggles others are now facing? And does the threat to their spiritual well-being cause you spontaneously to plead that God will give them strength or even deliver them from the trial? And if some fellow Christian is slipping into spiritual irrelevance because of choices you have made—choices that you were free to make and choices which properly lay within the realm of your personal freedom—does that knowledge disturb you? Our great responsibility is to glorify the Master who has redeemed us; and if we will honour Him, we will love His people, building them and encouraging them and doing all that we can to make them strong.

Though the words were written almost two millennia past, they are pertinent to our spiritual welfare today. “You know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires” [ROMANS 13:11-14].

That final clause—“make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires”—deserves our full attention, and the more so in light of the message we’ve shared this day. The context in which this statement occurs is an emphasis on revealing love for one another—love that is evidenced through treating one another with respect, love that is apparent through refusing to betray each other’s vulnerability, love expressed through welcoming one another, love that is apparent through avoiding an attitude of being judgemental and love that is advanced through always remembering that we must give an accounting to God for our own actions. Refusing to make provision for the flesh, refusing to gratify the desires of the flesh, is nothing short of accepting the gift of freedom with the gravity it deserves.

It is impossible to act as a free individual if one is not in fact free. Of course, one cannot be free while they are still in bondage to sin. Jesus offers freedom. To the Jewish leaders of the day in which He walked among men, Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” [JOHN 8:34-36]. Paul, building on this knowledge, reminded the Christians of Galatia, “For freedom Christ has set us free” [GALATIANS 5:1]. My question to you is, are you free? Do you have the freedom He promised?

I would be remiss if I should fail to remind you that freedom—freedom to know God, freedom to be all that God has created you to be, freedom to fulfil His will for your life, freedom to come into His presence—is the gift promised to all who receive Jesus as Master over life. This is the message we bring. Christ the Master died because of your sin. He was buried and He was raised from the dead on the third day. He walked among men, was witnessed as alive by those who were chosen by God and He ascended into the glory where He is now seated at the right hand of the Father.

Now, God calls each person to believe this Risen Jesus. This is the promise of the Father. “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is my Master,’ believing in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be set free. It is with the heart that one believes and is made right with the Father, and with the mouth that one confesses and is set at liberty.” The promise of God is iterated by quoting the words that Joel wrote long years before Paul was writing. “Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord shall be set free” [ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13].⁵

I pray you have this freedom; and I pray that you are living as one who is truly free.
Amen.

⁵ Author’s free translation