



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



The Cost of Freedom

I am disappointed every time I think about those who lack appreciation for our great country and the tremendous value attributed to its freedom. To get an idea of the price of freedom, consider this: The number of American lives lost during World Wars I and II is approximately 346,044. Our service members have counted the cost time and again, standing fearlessly, even when the ultimate sacrifice of life had to be made. The history of the United States clearly reflects our determination to withstand forces of evil that would hold us captive and to embrace the freedom of others. It's "The American Way."

The desire for physical freedom comes naturally to every human being. Though it may slumber at times, it only needs to be awakened by the still, inner voice that cries out for release. The enemies of liberty have sought to silence this small voice by convincing many to accept substitutes (Those who buy into the enemies' lies ultimately find freedom has no substitutes.)

When we study the Bible, we learn about spiritual freedom, which is just as amazing as physical freedom. Spiritual freedom is a desire embedded in us by our Creator, God Himself, who thought it so important that He was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice so we could experience it.

God loved us with an everlasting love. When we were weak and without strength from the bond-

age of sin, He sent His Son to sacrifice His life so that every man, woman, boy or girl who accepted His sacrifice would have true freedom.

American soldiers see their sacrifice as important for the benefit of families and our great country. If they lose sight of the worthiness of those for whom their sacrifices have been made, few will offer their lives.



Jesus Christ, the Son of God, knew those for whom He sacrificed His life were unworthy. But in Romans 5:6, the Bible tells us He died for the ungodly. That included you and me. If it were necessary (praise God, it is not!), He would even do it again!

The thief who would take our spiritual freedom comes to kill and destroy; but Jesus, who sacrificed His life for us, said, "I am come that they might have life ... more abundantly." (John 10:10)

Spiritual freedom is true freedom because it releases us from sin. This freedom is indestructible; and it will never be restricted by any act of war, tribulation, distress, persecution, famine or peril. And that is because, unlike our fellow-Americans in uniform who must repeatedly make sacrifices to maintain our physical freedom, our Lord made a one-time sacrifice which secured our spiritual freedom with the proclamation, "Whom the Son sets free is free indeed!" (John 3:36)

- Dr. L.W. Edwards

Freedom to Say No

In the summer of 2012, two men walked into Jack Phillips' cake shop and attacked him without once brandishing a weapon, throwing a punch or laying a hand on him. Jack's body was not harmed. But for the next six years, his religious freedom was on life support.

After being disconnected from the ventilator, Jack's religious freedom had to lace up its running shoes in preparation for a marathon. That's because in 2017, an attorney set Jack in his legal crosshairs and pulled the trigger.

At issue in these attacks was Jack's decision to say no. He had been asked to design cakes promoting messages which conflicted with his Christian convictions, and he believed he had a right to refuse.

Jack's opponents believe he had discriminated against them and violated their right to be served by his bakery. Whose rights were right? What does the Bible say about the freedoms Americans celebrate on July 4?

Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31b-32) As the Source of all truth, the Bible is also the Foundation for freedom.

What does this mean? From what does the truth free us? Jesus continued, "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."

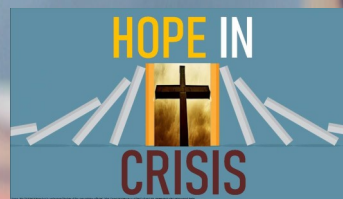
We can relate to slavery here in America. It was the practice of holding people captive against their will. Jesus said those who practice sin (and that includes everyone) are held captive by it. It controls them, and they cannot break free. The only way to experience true freedom is through faith in the Son of God who broke the chains of sin when He died on the cross.

Once we have been released from sin's power, we are free to follow God as we were created to do.

What does this mean for Jack? It means he is free to accommodate his customers so long as doing so will allow him to remain faithful to the One who freed him from his own sins. He has a higher obligation to say yes to Him, even if that means saying no to others.

What does this mean for Jack's opponents? It means their rights to be served by men on Earth come second to their need for a right relationship with God in Heaven. Without Jesus, they are slaves to sin who need His mercy and forgiveness to be set free. More than accommodation, they need His truth.

While human rights battles continue in courtrooms on Earth, we can rest assured the matter has already been settled in the courts of Heaven. And that means we are free to say 'no' to sin — both in our own lives and the lives of others.



Sermon of the Month

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PO Box 3862, Barrington, IL 60011

847-909-8543/biblewayministries@sbcglobal.net