

SPIRIT OF FREEDOM  
[written in oral form]

I Galatians 5:1; 2 Corinthians 3:17  
Freedom theme for choral piece "Freedom Trilogy"

February 24, 2019  
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In spite of what the bulletin states, I will not be preaching a sermon.  
Obviously, a pulpit is required for a real sermon. A music stand is much too wimpy.

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My presentation is mostly to set the stage.  
The two verses are to serve as a reference point / a foundation.  
Moreover, my focus is very narrow, ....yet with broad implications.

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Freedom.  
The call to Freedom.....  
That Freedom cry rolls like thunder through the vast dark times of human history.  
From flash point to flash point people have felt, deep in their souls, the reverberations of roaring calls to freedom.

Even the protest of rattling chains unnerves the captors.  
Freedom is profound.

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Bondage, any sort of bondage is being trapped and that is torturous, indeed. Bondage is like a cancer that gnaws away one's spirit.

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Freedom is glorious,.. yet freedom is Not a void or a vacuum.  
Freedom requires perspective and parameters to empower the wonder and beauty of opportunity and choice.

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Paul stresses in Galatians 5:1 that Christ has set us free for the pure sake and love of freedom. --real freedom.

He admonishes the reader to stand firm / to make Good choices.... to avoid slipping back into a yoke of slavery.

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As you know, a yoke is the device used for carrying / pulling a burden.  
And, there are so many burdens out there.  
There are some that weigh us down, ...time and again,.....and like an addiction.... we can slip back into that yoke.

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Freedom is the absence of bondage, but freedom **is** with context.  
Freedom is not a condition for self-indulgence, for that leads to destruction..... and slavery.

In a way, Freedom is the state of contentment and peace with ourselves and all of creation.  
In freedom, we choose and appreciate the limitations and parameters.

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For example:

My other German Shepherd, Louie, was very well trained.

I could take him to public places, and not use a leash... because he would listen / respond to my instructions. He chose to be obedient.

Compared to most dogs who were tethered to a leash, he was quite free.

Compared to a wild dog who is chained to hunger and peril, Louie was very free. He had opportunity and choice.

He chose to accept the parameters and perspectives of being a big dog.

He chose, out of respect and loyalty, ... to follow my lead,..and he was free.

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Paul wrote in First Corinthians that Christ is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of Christ is....there is freedom.

That is a powerful statement,.....and it rings true when we know and accept that God, through Christ, loves us and wants what is best for us.

Hear that again, God, through Christ, loves us and wants what is best for us.

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Choosing Christ / Choosing to submit to the Biblical rules ...**out of fear**.....will not bring freedom.

Because.....the Spirit of Christ is NOT in that.

Love is Not controlled by fear.

When we choose to embrace the love of God--Christ, we will know what freedom is all about.

And, freedom includes willingly denying our lusts, carrying our cross, or in other words, facing what is killing us.....and choosing to follow Christ.

We can choose that way when we know that God, through Christ, loves us and wants what is best for us.

It is a process. Real FREE living is a journey, a journey that begins with good choices.

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Listen to a poem by Mary Oliver, called "The Journey"

One day you finally knew.....what you had to do, .....and began,....

..**though** the voices around you....kept shouting their bad advice –.....though the whole house began to tremble and you felt the old tug at your ankles.

“Mend my life!”.....each voice cried.

But you didn't stop.

You knew **what** you had to do,....

....though the wind pried with its stiff fingers at the very foundations,.

....though their melancholy was terrible.

It was already late enough, and a wild night,.....and the road full of fallen branches and stones.

But little by little,.....as you left their voices behind,....

.....the stars began to burn through the sheets of clouds,...  
.....and there was a new voice.....which you slowly recognized as your own,.....that kept you  
company.....as you strode deeper and deeper  
into the world,.....determined to do...the only thing you could do –  
determined to save.....the only life you could save.

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We are not alone on our journey.  
There a voices pulling us to bondage....., and there is something / someone beckoning us to go forward  
..... to find our free self.

At some point on that freedom journey,.....you and I will discover we are with God.....and with all  
creation.  
And,.....there is love.

The journey begins.....by letting go and choosing Christ.