

We, as Americans, love our freedom, even if at times we do not recognize that we are not entirely free. Before we discuss this very important topic, we need to comprehend what true freedom is. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines it this way: *“Freedom is the power or right to act, speak, and think without external hindrance, restraint, or coercion. It encompasses both the absence of oppressive control and the presence of autonomy, allowing individuals to shape their own choices and destiny”*.

We think we have freedom and yet there are places we cannot be ourselves or say and do what we want to do. Sometimes that is good, and sometimes it is bad. We go to school and are often coerced into believing a certain way. We are ridiculed if we voice our opinion or go against the crowd. We are conditioned to become a robot where everyone thinks and acts the same, even in Bible colleges and seminaries.

There are very few institutions that teach us how to think for ourselves, how to reason through thought processes, how to use critical thinking skills to form our own opinion on a matter. And yet, that is what being free is. We are taught against individuality and forced into group-think where everyone thinks the same. And like the dictionary definition presents, our thoughts and thought processes affect our choices, and yes, our destiny.

Our “church” denominational settings do basically the same thing. We must accept the doctrine of the “church” denomination in order to be a part of the group. We must obey its rules, which often will not allow us to teach others or do other things without supervision from those who have been deemed worthy by the structured organization.

Don’t get me wrong. Some structure works well for some people who seem to need a good deal of structure, but we still have to use our free will to decide what that means to us. We still need discernment and to think for ourselves. A good structured organization will allow freedom to question, and encourage those involved to think for themselves and to seek God for answers.

The Bible teaches us a lot about what real truth is.

and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:32 (NET)

These are words Jesus spoke. The Greek word for “know” in this verse means “to understand, to perceive”. The same word is used in verse 55 when Jesus tells the Pharisees that God is Father and they do not know Him but Jesus does. They do not understand God as Father, therefore they do not understand the Father heart of God.

God wants His people free. For decades now He has told me to declare what is in His heart, “Set My people free” and “Let My people go”. People and systems can keep us in bondage, but freedom begins with our choice to want it. The choice begins with desiring to know the heart of God and truly understanding who He is. We cannot understand the fulness of truth without being in the heart of God and that requires us to understand our identity as sons and daughters of the King.

Knowing truth, knowing God, discerning the heart of God in any situation we face, is what sets us free. Jesus, Himself, is truth.

Jesus replied, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6

Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem for the last time. He not only knew what He was about to face, but He saw what was going to take place a few years down the road from the crucifixion and the resurrection. He looked at the city of Jerusalem and wept. He saw its destruction. Jerusalem had rejected Jesus and they had rejected truth. They did not recognize Him as their Messiah.

Jesus saw it and wept over Jerusalem because they were making the wrong choice, but the choice was theirs to make. Their choice would bring about the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. God would use this event to reflect the end of the old covenant and the establishment of the new. The Lamb had been slain and His blood had been placed on the altar in heaven. There was no more need for sacrifices on earth. The King was on His throne in heaven.

Jesus died and left us an inheritance. He restored to us the original intent that was in the Father heart of God since before creation. Truth of our inheritance can only be known through mature hearts who know and understand the Father heart of God.

We are going to take a thorough look at Galatians chapter four. It would be good to read the chapter several times from several different translations. When we are born again, we come out of Egypt. We should no longer be controlled by the world and its views. Unfortunately, most of us carry over our slave mentality from the world into our Christian life.

As we begin to see and understand Jesus better, we are no longer slaves, but we are still works oriented, so our mindset is one of a servant. Servants serve the Master, but they expect some payment or reward for doing so. Most Christians spend their entire lifetime in either a slave or servant mentality. Our lives become all about what we can do for God, rather than what God can do through us for ourselves and others.

God wants us to be free. He wants us to move on into maturity where we understand our identity of sons and daughters of the King. He wants us to not only understand it, but to walk in it every day.

Now I mean that the heir, as long as he is a minor, 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. Galatians 4:1,2 (NET)

Paul is explaining the way inheritances work to the believers in Galatia. He is explaining this so they understand how the Kingdom of God works. When you are a baby or young child, the inheritance is still all yours. It belongs to you as a child of the one who provided the inheritance, but you are like a slave, and cannot touch it. Why? Because you are not old enough to understand what it is and how to use it wisely.

That is the way it is in the Kingdom of God. We receive our inheritance from the moment we walk through the door of Salvation and are born again. But we don't understand what that means, nor how to use it with understanding of the Father heart of God. We still have a slave or servant mentality. It is during this time that we need "guardians and managers" (wording of the New English Translation). The King James version calls them "tutors and governors".

The Youngs Literal Translation says it this way:

but is under tutors and stewards till the time appointed of the father,

Galatians 4:1 (YLT)

These tutors and stewards are the five gifts given to the Ekklesia by Jesus listed in Ephesians 4.

He gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service, and for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a complete man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so we may no longer be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men, by craftiness with deceitful scheming. But, speaking the truth in love, we may grow up in all things into Him, who is the head, Christ Himself, from whom the whole body is joined together and connected by every joint and ligament, as every part effectively does its work and grows, building itself up in love.

Ephesians 4:11-16 (MEV)

The whole purpose of these gifts is to watch over us as we mature into the knowledge of truth and the Father heart of God. They are meant to help us grow up in the things of God until we no longer have a slave or servant mentality but understand that we are children of God. Only then can we see fully and understand in depth what is our inheritance and how to properly enjoy it.

And because you are sons, God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, crying, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Galatians 4:6,7 (MEV)

If you continue to read in Galatians 4, we see Paul comparing being a child of the slave woman versus being a child of the free woman. The slave woman represents flesh, the free woman represents spirit. Until we move from having a slave or servant mentality where we are ruled by our will and our emotions, to understanding our adoption by Father God, we will never fully understand freedom. We will never fully understand Truth. We will never fully live in our inheritance which is indeed ours from the beginning, but we have not matured enough to walk in it.

We are so enthralled with the message today of the Kingdom of God, but without truly experiencing the Father heart of God, we take the new, the exciting, and mix it with our old way of thinking and it becomes a doctrine made under slavery mentality and it is not of God.

I, too, was enthralled with the message of the Kingdom. God had to get our attention because our focus for centuries has been the gospel of salvation when it was meant to be the gospel of the Kingdom as mentioned in the Bible multiple times. But when new revelation comes, we want to run with it before God has given us the wisdom to fully understand it. That is how God's Word gets compromised. Running with the Kingdom message without understanding the Ekklesia is like "putting the cart before the horse".

When we emphasize the Kingdom without fully understanding the Ekklesia, we do not yet understand the Father heart of God concerning the Kingdom. The Ekklesia is who advances the Kingdom of heaven in the earth, so we must understand the true Ekklesia. We have built the "church" for centuries without understanding the true Ekklesia, which only Jesus can build.

The Ekklesia is the house Jesus is building or establishing. It is made up of individual stones that He, and He alone, takes and places where He wants them to be, doing what He wants them to do. That is not our job. The buildings we have built that exist on many corners in many cities is not the Ekklesia. Some of the Ekklesia may attend meetings in these buildings, but that is not what makes them the Ekklesia.

We must understand the Ekklesia before we can truly know how to advance the Kingdom of God on earth. That is the only way. To understand the Ekklesia, we must mature in the things of God and understand our sonship (sons and daughters of the King). Sons and daughters understand their Father's heart and what is truly being built. Without the mature Ekklesia and the understanding of the Father's heart concerning her, we cannot advance the Kingdom of God in the earth according to the Father's heart.

Recently, God has thrown another wrench into my thinking. The reason the Kingdom has advanced very little in the earth, is because we have not comprehended what the Ekklesia truly is. To compound that, we have also not fully comprehended what the Ekklesia truly is because we have not understood the true function of the five gifts given to the Ekklesia by Jesus. Until these tutors and stewards mentioned in Galatians four understand their true function and purpose, the Ekklesia will not become what she is meant to be.

This is especially true of the apostles and prophets as they are a part of the foundation laid by Jesus. They are responsible for preparing a people to know their God.

Even before man was created, God knew humans would sin and walk away from Him. The further away they moved, the harder it would be to hear His voice and understand who He really is. So, He created all of nature to constantly remind humans who He is and why they were created.

He designed it so those He knew would be sensitive to Him, many from childhood, would be able through the anointing placed in them, be able to draw people to God, so they too could know Him as Father and hear His voice clearly. The apostles and prophets would know God's heart and be able to see His plans and strategies. They

LET FREEDOM RING AND LET IT REIGN

would then, not only convey them to the people, but through the anointing cause them to operate from the Father heart of God as an apostolic and prophetic people.

These gifts, along with the others mentioned in Ephesians 4 would help these stones (people) become mature and advance from the slave mentality into the understanding of their God as Father, so they could cry “Abba Father” or “Dear Daddy”. They would become mature spiritual adults with understanding of their Father and His heart. They could then reproduce.

It is the stones that have matured, that have been polished that are then brought to Jesus to be placed in the House He is building to do as He pleases. They no longer need the handholding of the gifts. They have fellowship with them and enjoy them, but there is no longer a need to steward or tutor them. They can now hear the voice of God for themselves and can themselves begin to steward and tutor others.

God designed our human families to illustrate this spiritual truth. We no longer need our parents to teach us, to parent us, to help us make wise choices. That doesn't mean we stop communicating or asking their advice, but we are able to make our own choices and accept the consequences of our choices. We are still family and enjoy the company of each other, but when we are mature, our parents take on a different role in our lives.

If we are to advance the Kingdom of God in the earth the way God intended for us to do, we must first understand and become the true Ekklesia. If we are to become the true Ekklesia and allow Jesus to build what He desires, we must first understand and recognize the gifts He has given to the Ekklesia for the purpose of our maturity so we can possess our inheritance.

If we put emphasis on the Kingdom without understanding the Ekklesia, we will go down a wrong path. If we put emphasis on the Ekklesia without understanding true apostles and prophets, we will also go down a wrong path. We must gain understanding and truth. We must desire Truth and Freedom. Jesus is Truth and He showed us the way to the Father heart of God. It is only there that we experience true Freedom.

This seems boring to many believers. They want a splash and sparkle. But, for those of us who have experienced just a small bit of our inheritance, it is anything but boring and we want more. I want to experience everything that the Father heart of God has planned for me. I do not want anything to hold me back, including my own misunderstanding of God. Therefore, I constantly seek His heart. Change my ways, O God.

As we celebrate our nation this month with the cry of freedom, let us also cry to God to know the truth concerning the freedom Jesus died to give us. Let us leave our slave/servant mentality behind and enter into the understanding of our sonship, so we can possess our inheritance that has been ours so long, but we have not seen it or understood it.

LET FREEDOM RING AND LET FREEDOM REIGN.