

# Liberty

Joe Slater

Most Americans, including yours truly, put a lot of stock in freedom. The Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the Statue of Liberty, and many others remind us of the grand heritage of freedom with which God has graced this nation.

Christians, whether in America or elsewhere, enjoy unsurpassed liberty of a spiritual type. Even Christians who are not free in the political sense have freedom in Christ, "for he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman" (1 Corinthians 7:22a).

Jesus frees us from sin (John 8:32-36). He liberates us from its servitude, its guilt, and its penalty. Jesus paid the ransom price for our freedom when He suffered, bled, and died on the cross of Calvary. We receive the blessings of that atonement when we identify with His death, burial, and resurrection through our baptism (Romans 6).

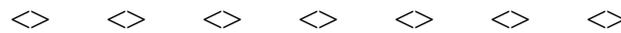
We are also free from the Law of Moses (Galatians 5:1). Whereas you and I have never been under the Law, some of Paul's readers had grown up under it; they probably appreciated the freedom of the Gospel to a greater degree than we do. Still, there were false teachers back then who tried to subject Christians to the bondage of the Law; their spiritual descendants are with us today, and we must be on guard lest they "bring us into bondage" (Galatians 2:4).

In Christ, we enjoy liberty from the uninspired traditions, opinions, and convictions of other people. Where God has not spoken, we are free to use our judgment. Paul's warning, however is still valid: "But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak" (1 Corinthians

8:9). Even things that technically are not sinful may offend the consciences of weak brethren; in such cases, we must be willing to sacrifice our liberty for the sake of love.

Another warning from Paul is also in order: "do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh" (Galatians 5:13). Liberty is not the freedom to do as you please, but rather to do as you ought. Those who abuse liberty as a license to do whatever they feel like doing are not really free at all. Peter tells us "they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage" (2 Peter 2:19).

As we celebrate our nation's freedom, let us be thankful not only for it, but for our spiritual freedom in Christ. And let us not "use liberty as a cloak for vice, but as servants of God" (1 Peter 2:16).



## Jesus of Nazareth

**HE OWNED NO SERVANTS, YET THEY CALLED HIM MASTER.**

**HE HAD NO DEGREE, YET THEY CALLED HIM TEACHER.**

**HE USED NO MEDICINES, YET HE HEALED MULTITUDES.**

**HE HAD NO ARMY, YET KINGS FEARED HIM**

**HE WON NO MILITARY BATTLES, YET HE CONQUERED THE WORLD.**

**HE COMMITTED NO CRIME, YET THEY CRUCIFIED HIM.**

**HE WAS BURIED IN A TOMB, YET HE LIVES TODAY.**

--Author Unknown (via House-to-House/Heart-to-Heart)

## You Have A Part To Play

**"Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father"** (Matt 10:29 NASU).

Sir Michael Costa (1808-1884), naturalized British conductor and composer, was the most celebrated British conductor of his day, being knighted for his accomplishments in 1869. Once when he was having a rehearsal with a vast array of performers, one man who played the piccolo far up in the corner stopped participating, probably thinking that his instrument among all the instruments would not be missed. Suddenly, the renowned conductor threw up his hands and all was quiet. Then he cried out, "Where is the piccolo?" The master conductor had missed it and the selection was spoiled because one man failed to carry his part.

The first thing we need to grasp is that none of us is insignificant. God knows if a sparrow falls to the ground. We are more significant than sparrows! We all have a part to play in this orchestra of life. God wants us to realize that we are not unimportant to Him; He wants the music played with all of us participating.

Next, we need to see that taking part in something great gives us meaning as well. In the world's eyes, we all cannot be great, and most of us don't care for it, but we all are able to attach ourselves to greatness. Those musicians were privileged to play for one of the greatest conductors that ever lived. We, dear friends, are privileged to be a part of the greatest symphony that will ever play. We, as the Lord's followers, are involved in His masterpiece that will have a perfect ending.

Finally, we also need to follow our Conductor's lead. We will not perform well in life otherwise. He knows best, and knows how to get the best out of His followers if we trust Him and follow His lead.

Don't let the Lord cry out to us, "Where is the piccolo?"

Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)