



THE CHRISTIAN ALERT
June 28, 2021

“I want to be free!” the young man shouted at his bewildered parents. “Free of your restraints. Free from your nagging. Free to do whatever I want whenever I want.”

Free! Oh, how we long to be free! But freedom means different things to people, doesn't it? When you think of “being free,” what do you mean? What does freedom look like?

This week we Americans celebrate our annual festival of freedom. Parades will take place, grills will work overtime, and fireworks will light up the night sky. Numerous speeches will be made in small towns and large cities extolling the freedoms which Americans have. We most certainly should celebrate our freedoms even as we should be ever vigilant in maintaining them.

But one thread running through the conversation when most talk of freedom is the thread of uninhibited, unfettered, personal choice. Freedom in our culture has come to mean ... behaviorally speaking ... a form of independence or self-sufficiency which is not constrained by outside forces. In our culture we seem to feel free only if whatever we do is of our own choosing and we are able to change what we choose at any time we choose. So freedom means to be unbound by the constraints of society or religious faith or parental tradition or history.

Running contrary to these definitions of freedom comes one from the Apostle Paul. From his own experience, illumined by the ancient tradition of the faith, Paul calls us to the celebration of our freedom in a slightly different way. Independence and freedom are not the same thing for the Christian as they might be for others. Paul says to be “free” is to be attached to God, through Christ, in the right way, through a radical loving discipleship.

Paul says, “For freedom Christ has set us free.... For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love serve one another” (Gal. 5:1, 13).

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Follow us on Instagram @championchristianchurch
Facebook @ Champion Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

10:30 am WORSHIP In-Person and livestream on Facebook

www.championchristianchurch.org
July 4, 2021- Pastor Ken Hopkins
 Scripture: 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10
 Sermon: “Who Rules God’s People?”

CHURCH FAMILY

Bill Hedrick- Continued prayer for healing

Please continue to pray for those recovering in their health and our homebound.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Monday, July 5- All Church offices will be closed.
 Tuesday, July 6- 7 pm Trustee meeting

A bedrock foundation for Christian freedom is expressed in those words. You and I have been set free by God in the action of Jesus Christ from slavery to “the desires of the flesh” which separate us from one another, that we might be attached to God and each other in a different way ... in the way of love that produces the fruit of God’s Spirit.

Christian freedom is not found in our choosing, in our action, in our willingness, or even in our volunteering anything. Such a notion, popular as it is among us, is a perversion of freedom, a corruption of liberty which leads to a distorted faith.

Christian freedom is found in acknowledging God through Christ has chosen us with a particular purpose in mind ... that we might live and be led by the Spirit of God into the things that make for peace, shalom, wholeness for all the people of God’s world. What we are to do in life is not our free, independent, unfettered choice! It is the choice of the Creator who shaped us. And so life’s task is not to decide what we want to do or be, but to discern what God calls us to do and be. And until we discern God’s call for each of us we will

not know the exhilarating liberation God wishes us to know.

Also, this Christian freedom calls us from private individualism to personal community. Christian freedom is not the same as independence. So the voice I hear, falling on my ear, in the beautiful “Garden” song is one that calls me away from my individual concerns and narrow blood family ties, and says directly to me “through love serve one another.”

Only by binding ourselves to one another do we find Christian freedom. And such thinking flies in the face of a culture which extols independence and self-sufficiency. “Me” and “mine” seem to be the words of our culture, while the words of our faith are “we” and “ours”.

One observer has written, “To live for the moment is the prevailing passion - to live for yourself, not for your predecessors or posterity. We are fast losing the sense of belonging to a succession of generations originating in the past and stretching into the future. It is the waning of the sense of historical time that distinguishes the spiritual crises of our day.”

So as we approach this Independence Day, I suggest that if you seek a faithful rendering of Paul’s preaching on freedom to the early Christians, rather than thinking in terms of individual rights and personal freedoms, reread that document of such great importance in the life of our nation. I think you’ll find it’s rooted far more in Paul’s preaching than in present political philosophy. Hear the overtones of faith it contains: “We hold these Truths to be self-evident,” the delegates gathered in Philadelphia declared, “that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness....”

With those words the authors of the Declaration of Independence fostered a vision of a new social order, a new way of being attached to one another as a people. Yes, freedom for each person, yet within the context of being responsible to all. How does our Pledge go? “One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

WEDNESDAY DEVOTIONAL FROM REVEREND CYNTHIA

As an Ohio Regional Elder, Reverend Cynthia Klingemier is providing a short devotion available each Wednesday on Champion Christian Church’s web page, www.championchristianchurch.org, Facebook page, or the text updates if you are signed up. Her “Outside with Reverend C this Summer” started Wednesday, June 16th. Check it out to see where she will be each week.

FEEDING MINISTRY

The feeding ministry has a full supply of plastic bags and egg cartons. At this time we do not need any of these supplies, and will let you know when we are in need. Thanks!



Summer Trunk Sale

St. William Church
5411 Mahoning Ave NW
Warren, OH 44483

In place of the annual Rummage Sale,
The Women’s Guild will be hosting
a *Summer Trunk Sale* on July 31
from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

A promotional graphic for a virtual gathering. The top half is white with the word 'NOTHING' in large, bold, black letters. Below it, in smaller red text, is 'CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD' and 'ROMANS 8:31-39'. A red arrow points to the right. The bottom half is red with a white diagonal line. On the left, a red button says '> REGISTER NOW'. On the right, it says 'DISCIPLES VIRTUAL GATHERING' and 'SATURDAY 08-07-21'. At the bottom right, it says 'Let's be the church we say we are.' and there is a circular logo that says 'Imagine God's UNLIMITED LOVE'.