

# Celebrating Freedom

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by Kyle Pope

This past week our nation celebrated its annual memorial to our nation's independence. For many, it is a day of cookouts and time off work. It's a day of fireworks and fun with family. For those who served in the military, it's a day to remember their sacrifice and friends who gave the ultimate sacrifice. At the heart of it all, this day is about freedom – the freedom we enjoy and remembering the price paid to purchase it. Let's consider some things about what it means to celebrate freedom.

## What Freedom Does Not Mean

In today's world, many imagine that freedom means anyone can do anything he or she might desire without limits or consequences. That is foolishness! When man has attempted this throughout history the result is lawless chaos that ultimately compromises the freedom of those who live under such conditions. Think about it, if my desire is to steal your property, your freedom to use and enjoy it is necessarily restricted. If your desire is to kill me, my freedom to live without fear is compromised. Speaking of the wickedness of Israel in the time of Hosea, the Lord explained that when, **“there is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land,”** the result will be, **“swearing and lying, killing and stealing and committing adultery,”** as **“they break all restraint, with bloodshed upon bloodshed”** (Hosea 4:1b-2). When this happens, it doesn't result in freedom and happiness. Instead, **“the land will mourn; and everyone who dwells there will waste away”** (Hosea 4:3a). Law restricts some behavior in order to allow the free exercise of other behavior. Properly, all human law only derives its validity, force, and authority from God's law. The Holy Spirit explains, **“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law”** (Prov. 29:18). Thankfully, in this country we still enjoy the exercise of civil authority that restricts the sinful behavior of those who would rob us of our freedom to serve God. May it always be this way! Paul taught Christians to pray for our leaders, **“that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence”** (1 Timothy 2:2b).

## Liberty In Christ

The gospel of Christ is a proclamation of freedom purchased by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross (1 Peter 1:17-19). James called it **“the law of liberty”** (James 1:25; 2:12). This is a surprise to many. Our world rejects life in Christ because they see it as restrictive, but in reality it offers true liberty. This is true in many ways.

**1. The Gospel Brought Freedom from Mosaic Law.** The Law of Moses was intended as a **“tutor”** to bring the Jews under it to Christ (Galatians 3:24), but Peter explained that it was also a **“yoke”** which, **“neither our fathers nor we were able to bear”** (Acts 15:10). He was not saying it was impossible to keep. God told the Israelites they could **“do it”** (Deuteronomy 30:14). The problem was that while it brought the **“knowledge of sin”** (Romans 3:20), it offered no ultimate way to overcome sin. As a result, it was a **“law of sin and death”** (Romans 8:2). Sin demanded the death of a sacrifice and resulted in spiritual death for the one who committed it.

Jesus offered the ultimate sacrifice for sin **“once for all”** (Hebrews 10:10). The gospel of Christ liberated the Jew from this cycle of sin and death. Paul declared, **“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death”** (Romans 8:2). When false teachers came into Galatia teaching Christians to return to Mosaic Law, Paul taught them, **“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage”** (Galatians 5:1). Christ offered liberation from the restrictions of Mosaic Law,

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