

ye have been called unto liberty

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” (Gal. 5:13)

The liberty of the child of God is one of his priceless possessions. Made free by the Son, he is free indeed. But he is called to responsible freedom, not to license.

Children want to be free from the restraints of home. Young people want to be free from the discipline of study. Adults want to be free from their marriage vows. Still others rebel against being boxed in by regular employment. But these are not the freedoms to which we are called.

The stars are not free to leave their orbits and wander throughout space. A train is not free to leave the tracks and meander over the countryside. A plane is not free to leave its assigned course; its safety depends on the pilot's obeying the regulations.

Jowett comments, “There is no realm where the lawless are the free. In whatever way we wish to go we must accept bondage if we would discover liberty. A musician must reverence the laws of harmony if he would exult in his lovely world. A builder must put himself in bondage to the law of gravity, or it is not a house that emerges, but a rubbish-heap. What sort of liberty does a man enjoy who consistently defies the laws of health? In all these realms to trespass is to be maimed, to pay homage is to be free.”

It is true that the believer is free from the law (Rom. 7:3) but that does not mean that he is lawless. He is now enlawed to Christ, bound by the cords of love, and committed to obey the numerous commandments that are found in the New Testament.

The believer is free from sin as master (Rom. 6:7, 18, 22) but only to become a servant to God and to righteousness.

The believer is free from all men (1 Cor. 9:19) in order to become a servant to all, that he might win the more.

But he is not free to use his liberty as a pretext for evil (1 Pet. 2:16 RSV). He is not free to indulge the flesh (Gal. 5:13). He is not free to stumble or offend another person (1 Cor. 8:9). He is not free to bring dishonor on the Name of the Lord Jesus (Rom. 2:23, 24). He is not free to love the world (1 John 2:15-17). He is not free to grieve the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).

Man does not find fulfillment or rest in doing his own thing. He finds it only in taking Christ's yoke and learning of Him. "His service is perfect freedom."

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