

# Free - To Do What ?

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[ 0 : 00 ]    Often godly men, nor stands in sinners' way, nor sitteth in the scornished chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law, and meditates on his day and night.

He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river, which in his season yields his fruit, and whose leaf fadeth never. And all he doth shall prosper well, the wicked are not so, but like they are unto the chaff which wind drives to and fro.

In judgment therefore shall not stand, such as ungodly are, nor in the assembly of the just shall wicked men appear. For why the way of godly men unto the Lord is known, whereas the way of wicked men shall quite be overthrown.

This first psalm to God's praise, that man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray. That man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray.

And God hath perfected men, nor stands in sinners' way, nor sitteth in the scornished chair, the Christmas day light upon God's law and meditative on His law day and night He shall be like a free hat cross near planted thy heart which in His season yields its fruit and His sleep beateth never and only dust shall prosper well the wicked are not so but like the earth come to the trap with wind drive to and fro in judgment therefore shall not stand such as I'm God the hour nor in the assembly of the just shall wicked men appear for why the way of godly men and till the Lord is known where as the way of wicked men shall quite be overthrown let us turn together in prayer let's pray

[ 4 : 48 ]

O Lord our God as we come before you this time of worship we give thanks that you are ever the same you have not changed not since the last time we were met together this morning not since the first time we were introduced to the public worship of God not since the first time that we were privileged to meet at a family altar not since the time that you made yourself known to the children of men as their creator we are not told what that encounter was like we are told that it took place that you created man in your own image knowledge, righteousness and holiness that you created man out of the dust of the ground that you breathed life into that man making him a living soul out of his sight you took a help meet for him and they too together came to experience the face of God and whatever that experience entailed for them but they were face to face with their creator there was nothing to hinder them even though you the holy God who was their heavenly father as the creator God who brought them into being they were privileged to encounter your face and that face was towards them in favor and they were enlightened by your presence they delighted in it they walked in company with you we are told that they were placed by your hand into the garden where they enjoyed fellowship with being broken and yet the time came when that fellowship was broken they could no longer gaze upon your face because they lived in abject terror and fear of a God who now in their reckoning was a holy God who stood before them with that awesome holiness very much contradicting their own lack of it we see how the experience of mankind has changed over the centuries and yet you are the same you are the God who lives in eternity an eternity that you created an eternity that must be considered as a place that you inhabited before time was as we know time that is measured in certain ways and even before that was possible because you you are the one who created the measurements that were necessary to calculate the coming day and the coming night these are marvels to us these are wonders these are things which can't we cannot comprehend we have mortal man today gazing into the stratosphere looking out into the stars and counting them declaring from one day

to the next that they have discovered new stars new planets new parts to the universe even and yet you are the one who is able to number the stars you are the one who brought them into bay your greatness we cannot comprehend and yet we seek to limit your power and you we seek to limit your influence upon our life and we do not know what we are engaged in when we do that help us to acknowledge your presence this evening as we worship may your spirit make himself known to us taking your word and applying it to our hearts and minds opening our minds to the truth and opening our hearts also to the same truth we pray for your blessing upon this meeting upon all the gatherings of your people who worship in spirit and in truth all who wait upon the Lord waiting for the word to be open to them and to be applied meaningfully to their lives we give thanks that it speaks to all our contexts or situations whatever they may be we pray for every pulpit in our island and we ask Lord that you would bless the labors of your servants sent out with the gospel of your grace we remember vacant congregations we remember the newly vacant congregation of Graver and we pray for them in their newly experienced situation where you have not only deprived them of a minister but also a longer standing elder within their congregation through death we pray

Lord that you would remember them at this time remember all the congregations of Christ's people throughout the world thankful that the gospel that is your gospel has made inroads into different communities and different places throughout the world we imagine that the situation that we enjoy today was like this always and it wasn't who knows when changes were initiated but we do know from our history books that there was a sin blinded people living in these islands of ours and very little understanding of gospel liberty or the Christ who gave it and we pray Lord that you would remind us of that so that we would not despair of ever seeing such days again where the outpouring of your spirit would change lives and bring men and women young and old to cry out what must

I do to be saved stir us up to that end that we might see a day of power that you would bear your arm and speak into our darkness we pray for blessing upon the needs of the congregation those who are unwell we pray for healing those who are terminally ill we pray that you would speak to them during their dark hours those who are caring for them those who love them and are anticipating be separated from them we pray that you would uphold them and sustain them in their time of grief they sit sorrowful in their need and blind with their tones and so we are in our lives and we must enter into the veil of tears because our loved ones are taken from us or we ourselves are taken from them you have told us that we are but sojourners in this world and that is the truth concerning us all so pour out your spirit upon us that we might contemplate the glory that is in

Christ that we may have him as our Lord and our saviour and that we may solicit his help in all the needs that are ours remember our nation at this time remember the king and his family some of them recovered from from illness we pray that you would continue to heal and that spiritual healing would accompany it that the eyes of their soul would be open to see the glory of Christ we pray for our nation as a nation remembering the various parliaments pray for our council and those who serve upon that council remember the nations of the earth those embroiled in war those who are constantly suffering because of the wickedness that has come to the fore in the lives of those who lead them lord may their desires be thwarted and may their wickedness be rewarded so hear our prayers and grant to us thy unity of spirit in the bonds of peace and forgive our transgressions through christ the redeemer amen we shall sing to god's praise from psalm 139 psalm 139 verse 17 singing to the end of the psalm how precious also are thy thoughts so gracious god to me and in their son how passing great and numberless they be if

[15:17] I should count them than the sand they more in number be for time soever I awake I ever am with thee thou lord would sure the wicked slay hence from me bloody men thy foes against thee loudly speak and take thy name in vain do not I hate all those O lord that hatred bear to thee with those that up against thee rise can I but grieve it be with perfect hatred them I hate my foes I them do hold search me O God and know my heart try me my thoughts unfold and see if any wicked way there be at all in me and in thine everlasting way to me a leader be we shall sing these verses of Psalm 139 from verse 17 to the end 11 only sharing thoughts■■ in of all

PP beyond but created thee with perfect hatred and thy hate my force I thank you Lord Search me O cotton do my heart Try me my thoughts and thoughts And see if any wicked way there be a toll in me and in my heaven lasting way to me a litter be

We're going to hear God's word now as we find it in the gospel of Jesus Christ according to John chapter 8 We're going to read from verse 31 down to verse 47 31 to verse 47 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free They answered him We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man How sayest thou ye shall be made free Jesus answered them

Verily verily I say unto you Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin And the servant abideth not in the house forever But the son abideth ever If the son therefore shall make you free he shall be free indeed I know that ye are Abraham's seed But ye seek to kill me because my word hath no place in you I speak that which I have seen with my father And ye do that which ye have seen with your father They answered and said unto him Abraham is our father Jesus saith unto them If ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham But now ye seek to kill me A man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God This did not Abraham

Ye do the deeds of your father Then said they to him We be not born of fornication We have one father even God Jesus said unto them If God were your father ye would love me For I proceeded forth and came from God Neither came I of myself but he sent me Why do you not understand my speech?

[ 22 : 27 ] Even because ye cannot hear my word Ye are of your father the devil And the lusts of your father ye will do He was a murderer from the beginning And abode not in the truth Because there is no truth in him When he speaketh a lie He speaketh of his own For he is a liar And the father offered And because I tell you the truth Ye believe me not Which of you convinces me of sin?

And if I say the truth Why do ye not believe me? He that is of God Heareth God's words Ye therefore hear them not Because ye are not of God And so on May the Lord At his blessing To a reading of his word And to his name Be the praise Let us sing now The verses of Psalm 43 I'm going to sing the whole psalm Psalm 43 The whole psalm Judge me O God And plead my cause Against the ungodly nation From the unjust and crafty man O be thou my salvation For thou the God Art of my strength Why thrust thou me thee through For the enemy's oppression Why do I mourning go?

O send thy light forth And thy truth Let them be guides to me And bring me to thine holy hill Even where thy dwellings be Then will I to God's altar go To God my chiefest joy Hear God my God Thy name to praise My harp I will employ Why art thou then Cast down my soul?

What should discourage thee? And why with vexing thoughts Art thou disquieted in me? Still trust in God For him to praise Good powers I yet shall have He of my countenance Is the hearth My God that doth me save Psalm 43 This whole psalm To God's praise Judge me O God And plead my cause Against the ungodly nation Search me O God And plead my cause Against the ungodly nation From the unjust Hel Espion■■ Hoceeement

To Yeshua Part where will they initially Heter For they may kingdom But made a smooth Glory to God For there may of ■ me the pro for the enemy is oppression why do I more engulf oh send thy light for thy truth let them be guide to me and bring me to thine holy hell in where

[ 26 : 45 ] I dwell and blings be then will I too cause of her go to God my cheapest joy yea God my God my name who praise my heart my will employ why heart thou then cast down my soul what should discourage thee and why with sing

God start thou God is quiet in me still trust in God for him to praise good cause I yet shall have be all my goodness is the health my God that does me save so we turn now to the New Testament scriptures Paul's epistle to the

Galatians chapter 5 and we're going to read at verse 13 Galatians chapter 5 verse 13 for brethren ye have been called unto liberty only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh but by love serve one another for all the law is fulfilled in one word even this thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself but if ye bite and devour one another take heed that ye be not consumed one of another ye have been called but to liberty only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh if my memory serves me

I would say that it was a feature of the kind of preaching that I heard in my early days as a Christian convert that there was always an insistence within that preaching that the newly converted believer should forsake their old life and embrace the new and there was a clear line marking out the two lives a clear separation was made between what belonged to the old life and what should belong to the new and we understood

I suppose I understood anyway that what belonged to the life of grace and what belonged to the life of ignorance was clearly separated it was recognizable but at the same time for myself and I suppose for many others there was always this questioning about this line that existed so that rather than have a clear definition the line itself was blurred so that the question would occur is it permissible for me as a Christian to do this is it permissible for me as a

[ 32 : 23 ] Christian to engage in this activity is it wrong for me is it wrong for a Christian to do such and such so it was always I think evident that new converts wanted to be sure that what they did was appropriate and it wasn't just something that was brought to you through the preaching of the gospel you often were told by Christians that there was behaviour that was acceptable to the Christian and behaviour that was clearly unacceptable the denture I suppose with taking the

Christian life and then enumerating the things that were right and the things that were proper it meant that you were legislating or proscribing behaviour that applied to every person and the individual conscience was something that was removed from the equation altogether and there was a danger I suppose in that situation where rules and regulations that were of man's origin rather than were found clearly described in the Bible came to be the ones that were strictly enforced and that is still a danger to this day there were always and there are always people who will insist that there are a list of things that you should not do and that you should not be involved in and that there are a list of things that you should be doing and that you must be involved in and insofar as these lists are concerned it is perfectly appropriate for them to exist if they are publicly derived but sometimes there is no ground for them in the scriptures they are man made or they are extrapolations from the bible things that are taken out of the bible and out of the context in which these rules and regulations were found that was how it was in the day of christ how the lord had to deal with a legalistic spirit where there were countless rules and regulations that were man's rules and regulations and not god's and those who were using them were using them to bind the conscience of those who were under their rule people now if you notice we have already seen in this chapter how the chapter begins the chapter begins stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith christ hath made us free we noticed in that statement that it is quite appropriate to translate it from the original in this way it is for freedom that christ has made you free it is for freedom that christ has made you free and paul returns to that same statement again the beginning of verse 13 and he says for brethren ye have been called unto liberty he is emphasizing that freedom that is there in christ jesus and the emphasis that

comes at the beginning of the chapter stand fast don't allow anyone to take that liberty from you is there and that is important nobody should encroach on the liberty that is yours in the gospel because christ has secured it and christ has made it your own and you are able and you are required to stand in that liberty and what paul was teaching as we saw was that there were those who were insistent upon bringing you again into the slavish behaviour from which liberation had taken you and when that happens there is a failure to comprehend the genuine nature of what christ has secured but at this point paul moves on from an emphasis on the genuine and insisting on the nature of liberty he insists on that but he also requires that that liberty be understood for what it is you are free he says but you are not free to do what you like it is liberty as christ has secured it but it is never intended to be liberty to live life without reference to what christ would have you do or be so

I want us to think about the words that paul uses here to try and understand what do you say why is there an emphasis so clear an emphasis on the genuine nature of that liberty but at the same time why is there an insistence that seems to curtail that liberty in reality that's not what it is as we shall see we read in the gospel of John there the way christ was dealing with those who were challenging him for his truth and they were testing him and trying him because of the truth that he proclaimed they took the high ground and insisted that they were descendants of Abraham that they were children of

Abraham that they had the blessings that Abraham had been promised and as his descendants they took ownership of that but Jesus explained to them what that really meant and he said as Christ himself says you shall know the truth and when you know the truth it is the truth that sets you free and Jesus said that to a people who were enslaved by a particular way of life and seeking to ensnare others in the same life that they led it was the son Jesus insisted on that could free them so what Paul is saying here is this that while freedom is real and it is it is not anarchy as

[ 41 : 36 ] John Stott describes it it is not anarchy it is not you know what an anarchist is an anarchist is somebody who subverts the rule of law an anarchist is someone who deliberately sets about undermining law at every opportunity and insisting that they are free to live life as they choose without anyone interfering in their liberty to do so but the Christian is not someone who has that liberty because that is not the liberty that Christ has secured for them one of the commentators asked this question what is the shape of the liberty of the believer how do we know the shape of that liberty of which Christ speaks well he insists

Paul insists that we are not to use it for an occasion to the flesh do not use it as an opportunity to indulge your flesh in other words when Paul uses this word flesh he is usually referring to the sinful inclinations of our human nature that which is dominant in the nature of man before they come to know Christ they are under the governorship they are all under the rule of the flesh and Paul is saying as a Christian as a believing who has been liberated you cannot allow the flesh to be what governs your liberty you have been given freedom from sin and that freedom is not freedom to sin and that's where the danger lies so one of the commentators again

I don't know who was saying he was remembering his own experience I don't know where he we had that experience I didn't have made my flesh creep by the way for whatever it was because I'm not good at heights but he must have been climbing somewhere and during that climb there was a passage that he had to cross and there was nothing on either side of that passage he had to walk straight across and if he went to the one side he would fall to the depths on the right side and if he went to the other side he would fall just as far to that left side and he used that as an illustration that failure to comprehend the liberty that Christ has secured is fraught with danger because you either succumb to what is the lack of care with regard to

God's law which is antinomianism a defiance of what God's law is saying liberty as it were I suppose to do whatever you like I don't know if I put that the right way but the problem as far as Paul is saying here you have been given freedom from sin but that does not mean that you are free to do whatever it is your sinful heart inclines you to do when Jesus dealt with the Jewish lawmakers he frequently condemned them because they often either added to the law of God or the word of God or took away from it and they did so knowingly but notice how often these rules and regulations are selfish and man centred rather than

God honoring when we insist on one thing over against another thing the question is always or should always be on our lips where has this rule originated from what is its purpose is this something that God has given to us for his glory and for our eternal good can I find it in God's word can I understand it to be something that Christ has given to us for our spiritual welfare Warren Weersby says this here is my definition freedom is life controlled by truth and motivated by love leading to ministry and maturity in a sense he brings the truth of this passage to light only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh but by love serve one another what is suggested by the logic of what

[ 47 : 41 ] Paul is saying is this that freedom is yours so do not use it to please yourself rather use it to please God and if you use it to please yourself it is the ultimate slavery it may not appear to be but we are made free by Christ to please God and that is what our true liberty that's where it properly lies you know the name John MacArthur he was talking or speaking about Romans chapter 7 and explaining or helping to understand what Paul was saying in

Romans 7 there and I'll read these words to you we know he says that the law is spiritual but I am carnal sold under sin for that which I do not for that which I do I love not for that what I would that I do not but what I hate that I do if then I do that which I would not I consent unto the law that it is good now then it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me for I know that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing will is present with me but how to perform that which is good I find not for the good that I would I do not but the evil which I would not that I do now if

I do that I would not it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me I find then a law that when I would do good evil is present with me for I delight in the law of God after the inward man Paul is there speaking of himself describing himself for those God's marvelous right loves the righteousness of God loves that which

God loves desires to be what God desires him to be we touched on this in the morning in John and remember in that first epistle John goes on to say that these very things we'll come back to it again the Puritan Richard writes that a Christian is the greatest free man in the world yet he says in the with regard or in regard to love he is the greatest servant and Paul is saying that we are by love to serve one another because we are bought by God we are we are subject to God to serve him in love and to be the demonstration if you like of his love to the world through the manifestation of it in our own lives all the law is fulfilled in one word he says even in this thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself he expects the believer who is at liberty to live as

God has permitted them to live but that is expressed in showing love to their neighbour that's the hardest thing for every one of us to do you remember the question that was asked by someone who is my neighbour who is my neighbour if I'm expected to love my neighbour who is my neighbour so that I love my neighbour but my neighbour is everyone that we encounter even our enemy to fulfil this obligation is never easy because your neighbour belongs to such a broad constituent you are not allowed to qualify it you are not allowed to say well my neighbour is somebody that I am able to get on with my labour is somebody that conforms to the things that

[ 53 : 13 ] I'm happy to conform to your liberty as a Christian insists upon a demonstration of that liberty in your love being expressed to those that you may not even be of a mind of the one mind with as I said there's a strong connection between what Paul is saying here and what John is saying in his epistle remember how after the passage that we read in the morning here in 1 John in chapter 4 he says if a man say I love God and hated his brother he is a liar for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen how can he love God when he hath whom he hath not seen and this commandment have we from him that he who loveth

God loveth his brother also and that's a very demanding statement it's a very demanding requirement and the liberty that Christ has brought us into insists on it and even if it appears to us to be to be something that is binding enslaving enslaving us to a mode of life that we are not content to follow yet that liberty which is ours insists that that is how we express it in loving our brother by love he says said one another thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself all the law is fulfilled in one word even in this is that really something that is more important than discovering for yourself how liberated am I as a

Christian what is it that I can do without offending my conscience what is it that you can do as somebody that the Lord has liberated in expressing love for those who are considered by him to be your neighbour it's not something that's easy it's not something that's trivial but it's something that he insists on the gospel frees us from the law for the law again that appears to be contradictory it frees us from the law for the law in other words we are not bound by the law in order to be saved but we are saved in order to live by the law that's the major issue as far as

Paul is concerned our liberty is not to live the way we choose to live but to live the way God chooses us to live for his glory and that is something that we need to get our head around this is where love comes into its own lovelessness leads to life and that life leads to sin but the loving that God commands us to follow it can sometimes lead us into hostility but that hostility is one that we must deal with as those who are liberated by Christ thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself but if you bite and devour one another take it that ye be not consumed one of another where does that logic where does it take us where has it come from how has he taken us from thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself but if you bite and devour one another take it that ye be not consumed one of another we're familiar with the words that come after that because we so often read them on a communion

Sunday we read them as these evidences that are given to us of what it means to be Christ like what it means to be a Christian what it means to live in the light of the liberty that Christ has given to us and what it means to be in bondage what it means to be in the grip of sin still and yet Paul leading up to that he is insisting that this liberty if it does not result in loving one another if it does not result in loving our neighbour you question you ask the question why is it the case that there is biting and devouring that word devour is quite strong

[ 59 : 05 ] I think someone has described it as if you like as a dog fight you have seen a dog fight used to be the case when I was growing up if you went to a farm there was all kinds of dogs and some of them didn't get on and when they went head to head they didn't spare each other they were vicious and that's the picture that we have here a viciousness that is inappropriate on the part of those who are supposedly liberated and their lack of genuine liberty expressed in not loving their neighbour as they should research in this think of it like this if there is a point over which you are not willing to back down and your neighbour has the similar point which he is not willing to back down if the law of liberty is not in place if the love of the neighbour is not dominant what you have is this dog fight what you have is this striving that is not proper if you bite and devour one another take heed that you be not consumed by one of consumed one of another it's that serious it's a wonderful thing to experience the freedom that

Christ has secured but it is not a freedom that allows the ego to reign you are submissive to the will of God in all things and even when that requires of you to submit your will to God even in the face of those who are not in agreement with your position without surrendering the righteousness of the word of God which you are submissive to anyway then you are you are under God's instruction in all these things all the law is fulfilled in one word and you are obliged to fulfill the law you brethren have been called into liberty and that liberty is something that opens out you the opportunity to love and to serve one another it's a privilege that

God has given to us and we should remind ourselves of how truly and genuinely privileged we are because of that well he's going to now open out the difference that there is between those who are reigned who are ruled by the flesh and those who are governed by the spirit we'll open that out God willing next week let's pray oh Lord oh God we pray for your guidance in understanding the genuine nature of the freedom secured for us by Christ that we are not to be responsible for sacrificing it on the altar of our own egos or of our own egocentricity we are under your word and we are under your word for our reason we are to glorify your name through our submission to your word and we bless you and thank you that it is that that is genuinely liberating so we pray your blessing your word to that end forgive us in



Jesus name Amen I closing psalm is psalm 116 psalm 116 verse 1 before first verse  
tanzas I love the Lord because my voice and prayer she did hear my while I live will call  
on him who bowed to me his ear of death the cards and sorrows did about me compass  
round the pains of hell took cold on me my grief and trouble found upon the name of God  
the Lord then did I call and say deliver thou my soul O Lord I do thee humbly pray God  
merciful and righteous is he gracious is our Lord God saves the me I was brought low he  
did me help afford these verses to God's praise I love the Lord because my voice and  
prayer she did hear

I love the Lord because my voice and prayer she did hear I will I will which rivers he could  
come and sorrow sound Zhou ship Bart he will May come past round The pains of hell

[ 65 : 27 ] Will hold on me Thy grief and death Perfoum Upon the name Of God the Lord Then did I  
come And say Beliver Thou My soul O Lord Thy duty Am me God merciful And righteous

Ye gracious Is Our Lord God since The need Was Prodlo He did Me Help The Lord Now  
may grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest and  
abide with you all now and always. Amen.