

Life's Two Freedoms**Text: Luke 4:14-21****January 22, 1995****Rev. Kent Clise****Prayer:**

Loving God, by Grace alone you call us to service. Please strengthen us by your Spirit, for we want to be worthy of your trust. Bless this time of Word, with your hearing and listening. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

INTRODUCTION:

Two remarks, recently made by students at Duke University, caught my attention.

One remark went something like this, "My idea of the perfect evening would be a date with someone who isn't on Prozac." I interpreted this remark to mean; it is really hard to find someone who isn't depressed.

The second remark went something like this; "When I graduate, I have been giving thought to starting my own company. I have been shocked at the expense involved in meeting the licensing requirements of the State and Federal Government." I interpreted this second remark to mean; why can't I do things the way I want.

These two remarks caught my attention because; all over the world people are seeking the two great freedoms of life. People are tired of being controlled and being depressed. We all wonder; why can't life be simpler? Millions of people wonder if they will ever be able to give up anti-depressant drugs.

A cartoon appeared in a recent publication, in which a young person is asking his doctor, "What can I do to feel better without giving up what's making me feel awful?"

We understand this feeling. How can I lose weight without cutting down on my favorite foods?

How can I get better grades without cutting out what I like to do? How can I have better relationships with other people without making any changes?

How can I have a more fulfilling life without changing any of my habits? How can

I have this while keeping that?
 People cry out for a release from depression and oppression.

BODY:

Jesus Christ hears these cries! Jesus Christ comes into the world to proclaim two great freedoms, emancipation from the oppressing tyrannies outside of us and redemption from the depressing tyrannies within us!

Jesus says, I promise;

**"Release to the captive;
 Recovery of sight to the blind;
 Liberty for those who are oppressed."**

Isaiah wrote his prophecy under the heavy bondage of Babylon his message is perfect for Jesus. Jesus tells us our personal and common life shall be set free from human bondage. It was God who set the people of Israel free from Babylon.

Keeping the Babylonian metaphor intact, Jesus lifts the metaphor to its final stage by indicating that life's two great freedoms are found *only* in a personal relationship with God.

Therefore, Jesus *forever* offers the blessing of life's two freedoms. With God, we will receive emancipation and redemption. Here is where Jesus takes the idea of liberty to the final and ultimate stage. The emancipation which God promises will be achieved by redemption.

The power of our personal relationship with God links the pieces of life together and delivers to us the two great freedoms of life.

1.Emancipation:

Jesus declares a commitment to shatter external shackles. Hans Kung teaches:

"Jesus is a partisan to the poor in spirit! His birth, in a stable, identifies Jesus with all people who begin any part of life in humble circumstances."

Jesus expresses hope for the poor, oppressed and imprisoned. Jesus is indicating a solid dedication to the outcast, the leper, the blind, the helpless, the unemployed,

and to any person who feels life has fallen apart and it is necessary to start over. *For instance, Jesus would have us be concerned about a recent report by the United Nations which has indicated there are:*

*700 million illiterate adults world-wide
230 million unemployed adults world-wide
60% of the world's deaths are children under age 5,
although making up only 20% of the world's population.*

2. Redemption:

Emancipation without redemption is a colossal failure. Jesus begins with the physical and penetrates to the spiritual. Jesus promises redemption. Recent history reveals what happens when people are emancipated without being redeemed. Changing outward circumstances only; without seeking a personal relationship of redemption with God, will not provide life's two great freedoms.

Focusing on outward physical changes only permits the outward tyranny to continue. For instance, The Russian people were tired and weary from being denied the opportunity to improve life for their families and they believed the secret to emancipation was to destroy the Czarist form of government. The idea was, let's kill the rich and everything will belong to everyone and everyone will be free.

Therefore, the *Bolshevik Revolution* in 1918 promised freedom from external shackles. If the Russian people thought the Czar was an external shackle, they had not seen anything until the Communist terror of Josef Stalin. The Bolsheviks, to the end, focused on externals only. We'll build a wall through Berlin, and that'll keep us free. There was no God, and no Redemption.

The Bolsheviks wanted this and wanted to keep that. They wanted to be free to maintain freedom, with their brand of tyranny. Tyranny was traded for tyranny. The Bolsheviks did not allow God to redeem the hearts of the people. It was only a matter time until the Communist experiment a failed. Emancipation without redemption will always fail.

3. Application;

Emancipation without redemption is what is happening in our own lives here in Durham. As a part of the Triangle, we rank number one in business environment in

America. Imagine, number one in the richest most powerful nation in the history of the world. At the present moment, we are the only superpower in the world. And we are number one. Crème del le crème!

Affluence has lifted us beyond the oppression of poverty. We are as free as any society can be. We are the best of the best. We have freedom. We have lovely homes, beautiful children, the beach, the mountains and wonderful universities and hospitals.

We have achieved so much materially and financially, yet, we are enslaved to inner compulsions. We are addicted to alcohol, drugs, sexuality, money and power. We are emancipated, but not yet redeemed.

We can all understand what the Duke students meant. It is hard to find people who are not just flat out overwhelmed and depressed by life. We need our addictions to make it through a day.

CONCLUSION:

Someone or something far deeper than any external environmental change needs to reach us. We need redemption. We need a Savior.

Over a decade ago, Pope Paul stood in the shipyards at Gdansk, Poland and told the members of the shipbuilders union known as 'Solidarity'; "Freedom shall not be fulfilled in your labor union, unless each one of you is able to have Christ in your heart!" Imagine telling a bunch of shipbuilders, 'invite Christ into your heart and your struggle for freedom will be fulfilled'.

You know, the shipbuilders of Gdansk would bear no resemblance to the Junior League of Durham.

Jesus Christ is our redeemer. He promises us life's two great freedoms. These two freedoms will become reality when we have Christ in our heart and a personal relationship with God.