

True Freedom

07/05/2026

This weekend, we'll be celebrating the 250th anniversary of America. The freedoms we enjoy today have come at a great cost. I looked up the total count of Americans who have died in protecting freedom, not just here in America, but all over the world. The rough estimate is about 1,421,700 men and women have died in protecting our freedoms. This doesn't include law enforcement and other agencies that try to keep us safe on a daily basis. Plus, this doesn't include all those who were injured either physically or mentally because of protecting freedom. That word "freedom" is a special term. Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence that all individuals possess the natural rights to "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness". Benjamin Franklin once wrote, "Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety." George Washington, our first President after the U.S. Constitution was formed, wrote this in a letter in 1797, "While we are contending for our own liberty, we should be very cautious not to violate the rights of conscience in others, ever considering that God alone is the judge of the hearts of men." This nation has been the example of freedom for the past 250 years to all the nations in this world. We have the freedom of getting an education, getting a college degree, getting whatever job we want, invest our earning where ever we want within the law, and the list can go on and on. You can go to a grocery store and spend hours trying to decide on what to get because of the different varieties of everything. You don't have that freedom in a communist country. They choose for you on what they want you to buy. You see, our forefathers wanted us to enjoy the freedom they didn't get to enjoy before America became free. The meaning of freedom was shaped by those who came to America before Jefferson, Franklin, and Washington were born. Freedom was shaped by men and women who came to America to worship their Lord and Savior freely without a government telling them what to believe and not believe. The Pilgrims form of law and order helped to shape the early Colonial days of America. So, it wasn't

just freedom to do what we want was important to our founding fathers, but freedom to worship was just as important. George Washington stated this in his final address to the nation in 1796 as President of the United States, “Let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle”. Jefferson, Franklin, Washington, and all the other people who were involved in the forming of our great Republic knew this nation needed something else to keep that freedom alive – religion. Even people like Thomas Jefferson, who were not Christians, believed a nation can’t survive without the freedom of worship. These people learned about freedom from the Pilgrims who came before them. The Pilgrims learned about freedom from a source that helped to shape their view of freedom. We have to understand that “freedom” is not just an American term only. Freedom or free is a term that can go back into Old Testament times. I believe the only one who has experienced true freedom can understand and enjoy the freedoms we enjoy as Americans. A true follower of Jesus has experienced freedom in its truest form. We can enjoy American freedom, but some people don’t understand the cost of that freedom. We know about 1,421,700 American lives have been lost for American freedom. A high price has been paid for American freedom and those who want to destroy that freedom have no right in doing so. They should go to countries that fit their beliefs, don’t change America’s founding beliefs. For us to understand freedom, we must look beyond the human term.

A definition I found for “freedom” states this: the state of being able to act, speak, or think without undue restraint, or enslavement (Merriam – Webster). This is a very human definition, but let’s focus on the last word – enslavement. We hear about the history of enslavement either with the black race or through bond servants, which involved all races, during the early days of America. However, that is not that worst type of enslavement. We can think of those who have been enslaved in concentration camps (like Nazi Germany) or work camps (like Communist Russia). There were much suffering and pain and death in these horrible places. When some of the Nazi camps were liberated, many of the prisoners experienced some form of freedom even though many would have to

live with the scars mentally and physically for life. Even these camps are not the worst type of enslavement. The Pilgrims knew about the worst type of enslavement as did some of the writers of the U.S. Constitution. Remember last week, we had talked about Rev. George Whitefield who preached during the Great Awakening that took place in America between the 1720's and 1740's. Benjamin Franklin had gone to hear Rev. George Whitefield preach. George Whitefield preached about freedom that can be found in Jesus Christ. However, there was one preacher during the Great Awakening that really preached about enslavement and the penalty from that enslavement and that was Rev. Jonathon Edwards. In fact, he preached a powerful and famous sermon on July 8, 1741 called "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" which was part of the Great Awakening. In this sermon, Edwards stressed the point that all humans are born into sin and all humans deserve to be cast into Hell. He talked about the anger and wrath of God because of the horribleness in sin. Edwards didn't sugar coat anything. In one part of his sermon, he states this, "So that every unconverted man properly belongs to Hell; that is his place; from thence he is (University of Virginia). Mankind is born in sin. Paul tells us that in Romans 5: 12, "When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. (NLT)" This sin is disobedience to God and when we are born, we are enslaved to it from the very beginning. Our human nature is infested with it. It's like when a house is infested with ants – good luck in trying to get them out or keep them out. We are born in sin and we are enslaved to it, but the problem is we don't realize how bad. This sin effects every part of your life. It shapes your thinking, it controls your tongue, it controls your actions, it controls how you see things or view things, it shapes our view of people, and it even shapes our view of love. Not only that, but this sin we are born into also effects our view of God. In fact, this sin we are born into effects our reaction to everything around us. In other words, we are truly enslaved to sin. It effects all our actions and thinking. There is truly nothing worse than this type of enslavement. Plus, this enslavement will distort human freedom as well. This is why there is a growing amount of people in this nation who wants to destroy American freedom because they are born in sin and freedom is distorted to them – they can't understand it. Paul describes this enslavement of sin very well in Romans 7: 14 – 24, "¹⁴ So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. ¹⁵ I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. ¹⁶ But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I

agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

¹⁸ And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.^[a] I want to do what is right, but I can't. ¹⁹ I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. ²⁰ But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. ²² I love God's law with all my heart. ²³ But there is another power^[b] within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. ²⁴ Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? (NLT – www.biblegateway.com)

Paul is describing someone who is enslaved to sin. This would fit those who think doing good deeds make them a good person. Even their good deeds are done in a prideful manner. Paul is describing something that is truly horrible here. Jonathan Edwards wanted the people of his day to understand the horribleness of sin because so many were living in it. Remember, there was only about 17% of the Colonialists were going to church at this time before the Great Awakening happened.

Not only are we enslaved to sin or kept in bondage in sin, but there is punishment for those who decide to stay in this bondage or enslavement. Today, many believe if you don't talk about it, it won't happen. That is not the case. Jesus, the Son of God, makes it very plain in Revelation 21: 5-8, “⁵ And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he also said, “It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. ⁷ All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.

⁸ “But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” (NLT – www.biblegateway.com).

This is Hell for those who decide to continue to live in the enslavement to sin – void of God and filled with fire and sulfur. So, because of this sin we are born into, we will be enslaved to sin forever and ever. But wait! Freedom can be found from this enslavement to sin. Freedom can be found from this eternal punishment of Hell. This is what shaped the view of the Pilgrims and many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

Let's see what the author of freedom says about freedom. Let's turn to John 8: 34 – 36 where Jesus states this, "I assure you that everyone who sins is a slave of sin. A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family. So, if the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free. (NLT)" This is why, if we go back to Romans 7, that Paul finishes his description of the struggle with born into sin by saying this, "Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord! (NLT)" Only Jesus Christ can set Paul free from this horrible struggle against sin that he are born into because of Adam and Even – original sin. We were created to not sin, but because of what happened when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, sin entered in. Paul states this in Galatians 5: 13, "For you have been called to live in freedom – not freedom to satisfy your sinful nature, but freedom to serve one another in love. (NLT)" We were created in His image to live in true freedom in His love. When we continue to allow ourselves to live in sin, we are not living what we were originally created for. This is why God sent His dear Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sin. When the Spirit puts conviction upon our heart (we call this grace or gift from God), He gives us the opportunity to ask forgiveness for our sinful nature and tell Jesus we believe in Him. When this happens, all our past sin is washed away and forgotten because of the blood of Jesus that was poured out on the cross. Then, that sinned is washed out of our heart and the Holy Spirit takes up residence there and we start to live in true freedom – Jesus freedom, not human freedom. Paul states this in 2 Corinthians 3: 17, "Now, the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, he gives freedom. (NLT)" For those who have enjoyed this new birth through Jesus, they truly do know what true freedom really is. Also, since they know what true freedom is, it helps them to be thankful for the human freedom we enjoy as Americans in this wonderful Country of ours. For America to continue to survive, the people of America need to go through Jesus Christ to know what true freedom looks like and feels like. There is nothing like having all your past sin washed away through the blood of Jesus and to be forgotten forever. When this is done, you will live in true freedom. Let's pray for this nation that there would be a Great Awakening throughout the Church of America. I close with the ending of Rev. Jonathan Edward's sermon:

“Therefore let every one that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom: haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the Mountain, least you be consumed. (University of Virginia).

Do you know Jesus as your Savior today?

Happy 250th Birthday America!

***NLT Life Application Study Bible.* Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.: Wheaton, 1996**