TITLE: The Responsibility of Freedom

TEXT: 1st Peter 1:18-19 & 2:16; Gal. 5:1, 13;

Ro. 8:1-5; Is. 59:19

INTRODUCTION: America! Land of the free! Our nation has become synonymous with the word freedom.

 Ask any foreigner to name a free country and America would probably be their first response.

 For almost 250 years countless thousands have come to our shores, and today, countless thousands would like nothing better than to come here.

 Why?, What's the big attraction?

 We live in an inflated economy, the cost of living is high, we pay a tremendous amount of taxes ...

 Our cities our overcrowded, we have more than our share of violence---yet we have tens of thousands who try to enter our country every year, by legal and illegal means.

 Why? One word--FREEDOM!

 Even though America may not be perfect, it is still the nation that has the most freedom to offer its citizens.

 Freedom is our nation’s most valuable resource.

 Our nation abounds with freedom--but that doesn't mean that it is cheap.

 The freedom that we enjoy was bought and paid for in blood.

 Our forefathers fought and died to secure the freedom that we now enjoy in this nation....

 Freedom has a price and it is not now, nor will it ever be cheap.

 Actually, the freedom that we enjoy was first bought and paid for over 2000 years ago on a cross on a hillside overlooking Jerusalem.

 For what put the first settlers on our shores was men and women who had experienced the inner freedom that came through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and wanted to find a place where they could express that freedom in their worship of and service to God.

 I believe God led our ancestors to this land much as He led the Israelites into Canaan... Into a land that was so bountiful that it was described as a land flowing with milk and honey.

 The freedom that you and I enjoy and has drawn so many to this nation is a blessing from God.

 This morning I want to talk about the responsibility that goes along with God’s blessing of freedom.

 Our number 1 responsibility is to not take our freedom for granted.

 Our freedom as a nation or the real freedom that we as believers have because of what Jesus did for us on the cross.

 Scripture says that we were bought at a price.

 **1Pet 1:18 (NIV) For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,**

**19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.**

 The cost of our redemption, the cost to obtain our freedom from the bondage of sin and the judgment of Hell----The precious blood of Christ.

 God paid a high price, the ultimate price, for our freedom. He paid with blood, the life of His only begotten Son..

 We can take the freedom that God provided for us through the blood of Christ for granted by abusing that freedom that was so costly to God.

 And we often abuse that freedom, we do it as individual believers and we are doing it corporately, as a nation.

 AS A NATION.....

 We live in a nation that’s government is of the people, by the people and for the people, and because of that, we all are responsible for the direction that our government and our nation takes us. We are all responsible for the freedom that God has blessed us with as a nation.

 As a nation of free men and women we have an awesome responsibility in regards to our freedom.

 Will we be diligent to preserve that freedom for our children and our children's children?

 Will we use it to lift up, and exalt, and to serve our God? Or will we use it to lift up, exalt, and serve ourselves?

 The evidence is in!! We have used our freedom, to a large degree, for selfish reasons.

 We have the right to choose our leaders and in reality, create the laws by which we live.

 Let us look at our track record over the last 40-60 years?

 ISSUE:

Prayer in school-- If government represents the majority—the majority has chosen to take God out of the classroom and to remove God from our educational process.

 ISSUE:

 In order to preserve "Freedom of Expression" we won't allow children to express their faith in God in school but we will allow pornography in most of our major cities by saying that the artist has the right to express themselves no matter how offensive their art may be..

ISSUE:

 Abortion... "Freedom of choice" In this nation Non-therapeutic abortion has become the second most common surgical procedure after circumcision. (1.2 million per year). Non-therapeutic means that the abortion is not performed to insure the life or health of the women or for reasons of rape or incest, but rather because of her desire for convenience, absence of distress, and her so-called happiness.

 Abortion has become so frequent that population expert’s say that it has become, in effect, a new form of birth control.

 Of women having them 75% are unmarried, 32% are teenagers----20% are repeat customers.

 God is pro-choice--He has created us as free moral agents, with the right to choose for ourselves. But ask yourself--Would God have a women choose to destroy her baby or choose to abstain from that which got her pregnant in the first place?

 I could go on all day with the issues but I think you get my point…

 As a nation, we have, in a lot of areas, abused our freedoms and used them for selfish gain, to serve self...

Done, not what is right, but what was convenient for us.

 Individually, we as Christians, often do the same thing…

 Paul is speaking to the Church when he says....

**Gala 5:13 (NIV) You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.**

 Isn't this exactly what we see, not only happening in our nation, but often in our personal lives….

 Using our freedom to indulge our sinful natures, indulge our flesh!

 When we are saved, when we come to Christ with a repentant heart and ask Jesus to forgive us our sin and to come into our heart and be the Lord and Savior of our life, we truly become free men and free women.

 But our new found freedom is not freedom to sin; we were free to do that before we came to Christ…

 The freedom that God gives us at salvation is the freedom to not sin!

 Through the indwelling presence of Christ in our life we are given the ability, the freedom to do that which we couldn't do before----actually live a sanctified life, a life set apart unto God.

 **You, my brothers, were called to be free!**

Free from what?

 Free from past sins… Scripture says that our sins, once they have been forgiven, are as far removed from us as east is from west, that they are buried in the depths of the sea, that they are remembered no more!

 Now that is freedom! God hasn't just forgiven us our sin but He has forgotten that we have ever sinned in the first place! He can't see the sin that has been washed away by the Blood.

 That is real freedom! If our sins are removed than we can boldly come before the throne of Grace. We can stand before God in the purity of Christ.

 But past sin is only half of the freedom that Christ has secured for us…

 We have also been freed from future sinning…

 The Apostle Paul says it this way....

**Roma 8:1 (NIV) Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,**

**2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.**

**3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,**

**4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

**5 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.**

 **Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death**.

 Before we came to Christ we were entirely at the mercy of our sinful natures.

 God had given man His law but there was a catch, man couldn't keep it, he couldn't live up to Gods righteous requirements....

 The purpose of the law wasn't so that man could live up to it and save themselves.

 God knew that we couldn't do it.. Our nature to sin wouldn't allow us to.

 The purpose of the law, the reason that God gave it was to make man realize that he couldn't keep it, that he couldn't live up to Gods righteous requirements and that he was a sinner in need of a savior.

 The purpose of the law was to point us to Jesus!

**3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,**

**4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

 Here we see the fullness of the freedom that God has provided for us in Christ…

1.**For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.**

 Jesus took care of our past sin, He became a sin offering.

2.**And so he condemned sin in sinful man,**

**4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

 Through His indwelling presence in our lives He has given us an ability that we didn't have before!

The ability to not sin!

 So, when we come to Christ, we are not only forgiven of our past sins, but we are given the ability, through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to stop sinning.

 Church that is real freedom!

 Not just being forgiven of past sin but the promise of actually being able to not sin in the future...

 Sin always brings bondage. The only way to really be free is to break the yoke of sin.

 Jesus said to the women who had been caught in adultery... **Neither do I condemn you, now go and sin no more....**

Forgiveness of past sin + don't sin in future=REAL FREEDOM!

 But with this kind of freedom comes great responsibility.

**Gala 5:1 (NIV) It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**

 **It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.**

 Jesus set us free so that we could remain free. He died and rose again to give us that ability.

 **Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**

 You have been freed from your sins so don't enslave yourself again by them!

 Before a democratic nation, a Christian nation, can abuse its freedoms, the people that comprise that nation have to of first abused their freedoms.

**1Pet 2:16 (NIV) Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.**

 Isn't this exactly what we see going on in our nation?

 We are often using our freedom as a cover-up for evil!

 Sexual immorality and sexual perversion is being done under the cover of freedom!

 We kill our unborn under the cover of freedom!

 We flood our streets with pornography under the cover of freedom!

 We even try to remove God from our culture under the cover of freedom!

 Our country was founded, our constitution was written, by God fearing men who knew and understood the awesome responsibility of the freedoms that God has blessed us with. As individuals and as a nation.

 Over the last 75 years or so, starting with the 1960 supreme court, that supreme court has literally raped our constitution by claiming that "well, that surely isn't what they intended to say!"

 And then they re-interpreted what they think the constitution is saying to fit their individual ideologies.....

 SOME WORDS OF WISDOM FROM OUR FOUNDING FATHERS....

 Thomas Jefferson....

*"And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis...a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but by His wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that His justice cannot sleep forever!"*

 John Adams wrote....

 *We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion...Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other!"*

 George Washington said this in his farewell address...

 *"Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds...reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."*

(Example: Wall builder survey:, 62\63 prayer and God removed from classroom=morality issues among youth--skyrocket upward---teen pregnancy, violent crime among youth, venereal diseases all have continually gotten worse while SAT test scores have gone continually down.

 Abraham Lincoln, during the civil war, overheard someone in the white house state that he hoped that God was on "our side (the union side) in the battle.

 Lincoln, showing that he understood the principle of national accountability, replied...

 *"Sir, I am not at all concerned about that, for I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side."*

 This understanding of national accountability to God has been a part of our heritage, part of our history.

 Our founders understood that a nation needed to take a stand which lined up with Gods principles so that God’s blessings could rest on that nation!

George Mason (father of the bill of rights)...

*As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world, they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes & effects, providence punishes national sins by national calamities!"*

Jefferson--*I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just , and His justice cannot sleep forever!*

 Church before national sin, before a nation can abuse its freedom, the people that comprise that nation have to first abuse their freedom..

 Scripture has told us...**Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.**

 How are you and how am I using the freedom that God has blessed us with?

 Are we using our freedoms to serve God and advance His Kingdom or are we using them as a cover-up for evil?

 Our nation is on a crash course for disaster and the judgment of God!

 Are we really that arrogant in this nation to think that God will never judge us as a nation for the way we are abusing the freedoms that He has blessed us with?

 Before we can ever hope to change the crash course for disaster our nation is on we must first look with-in ourselves as Christians and make sure that we are on the right course….

 That we are not using our freedom as a cover-up for evil but using them to serve and honor God..

 Willfully sinning knowing that God will forgive us is a horrible abuse of Freedom..

 Church, the hope and future of our nation rest upon we, the Church!

 It was Patrick Henry who said...

 *"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ!"*

 On a more contemporary note, Carmen puts it this way..

 *"America's dead and dying hand is on the threshold of the Church!"*

 We are the last line of defense. We hold the answer for a nation that is being strangled by abused freedom…

 Scripture says

**Isai 59:19 (NKJV) When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.**

 Church, are we willing to do what is necessary to be that standard that the Lord lifts up? The standard of righteousness that is found in living the lives that God has called us to live.

 By living as free men and women, but not using that freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

 Church, The preservation and restoration of America is in our hands! It has to start here with us!

**2Chr 7:14 (NKJV) "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.**

 Will we rise up and act responsibly with the freedoms God has blessed us with?

Will we help bring God’s healing and God’s blessing back to our land?

In less than 2 months we will have another election in this country.

 This is how a free people selects those who will lead and govern them.

 Do you realize the great blessing God has given us to be a self-governing people.

 We live in a time when most news media and social media cannot be trusted to be impartial in their presentation of the news, especially where politics are concerned.

 In fact, most of the mainstream media seem to be just an extension of one of our political parties.

 This alone makes the times we live in very dangerous times, and it also makes it very important that we seek Gods guidance in how we cast our vote.

 The Church cannot any longer sit on the sidelines and not get involved. If we want our nation to remain a free nation.

 Charles Finney said it well…..

 **God cannot sustain this free and blessed country, which we love and pray for, unless the Church will take right ground. Politics are a part of a religion in such a country as this, and Christians must do their duty to their country as a part of their duty to God . . .**

 **God will bless or curse this nation according to the course Christians take in politics.”**

 **“Charles Finney” (1792-1875)**

Will you your duty to country as part of your duty to God?

**God will bless or curse this nation according to the course Christians take in politics.”**