

THE HIGH COST OF FREEDOM

The Fourth of July, America's annual Independence Day celebration, should cause us to reflect with great gratitude upon the many blessings that are ours to enjoy in this wonderful country. Numerous times I have read signs with the following words: "If you can read this, thank a teacher. If you can read this in English, thank a veteran." We are blessed with freedoms and liberties that the overwhelming majority of the world has never known nor will ever know. But, we must always be cognizant of the fact that our freedoms have come with a very hefty price tag. Freedom isn't free, and the memorials across our land to those who laid down their lives for the cause of liberty are testaments to the price that was paid for the betterment of our lives. May we never forget the sacrifice of these men and women who laid down their lives for us! As marvelous as the liberties afforded us in America are, the greatest freedom we enjoy as Christians is the freedom from sin through the blood of Jesus. Consider the high cost of this privilege.

Our freedom from sin cost God His most beloved possession. The justice of God demanded that a price be paid for our sins. His mercy and longsuffering demanded that man not have to pay the price for his own sins. How could God be both "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom.3:26)? The answer is found in the previous verse: "Whom [Jesus] God hath sent forth to be a propitiation" (Rom.3:25). A propitiation is a substitutionary sacrifice. The only way for man to be free from his sins was through the giving of Jesus in our stead. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Our freedom from sin cost Jesus his life upon the cross. The plan of God to redeem man necessitated a perfect sacrifice. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor.5:21). Because of his great love for man, and his desire to please God, Jesus went to the cross willingly so that we might have freedom from the guilt and shame of sin. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17-18).

Our freedom from sin will also cost us. It requires that we yield our lives to the will of the Master. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom.6:13). We must give up our will for His. In humble obedience to the truth, we will be made free from sin. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). When we give up our lives of sin, and submit to God by obeying His commands, then are we liberated from the shackles of sin and the dominion of the law of sin. "And such were some of

you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor.6:11).

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom.6:23-ESV). May we never forget the price that was paid for our freedom from sin!

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