

Nature of Liberty

#0691

Study given by W.D. Frazee—January 18, 1964

Around the world this morning, our people are thinking of the responsibility that is ours. We have been told that to us has been committed the banner of religious liberty that reformers like Luther carried generations ago. It is well for us to understand, of course, what liberty *is*, and, shall I say, what it *isn't*. I thought we might meditate a bit this morning on liberty and the nature of liberty.

The psalmist says:

“I will walk at liberty for I seek Thy precepts” Psalm 119:45.

This is echoed in the New Testament in the text that I would like to have you turn to: James 2:12. There are those who have the idea that the Old Testament is the testament of law, and the New Testament is the testament of freedom from law. But James, in one verse, unites for us the concepts of liberty and law:

“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty” James 2:12.

There we have it—the law of liberty. Liberty, then, is not freedom without responsibility, not at all.

One of our missionaries was telling us that some of the natives over in Africa, as they heard about freedom coming, their idea of freedom was this: that as soon as they got independence, got freedom, then they could travel on any side of the road they wanted to. Some of them had still, shall I say, worse ideas. You know, there in the Congo, some of those natives actually walked along and picked out what house they were going to have—some white man's house that they were going to have—as soon as they got freedom, and whose *wife* they were going to take as soon as they got freedom.

Of course, we don't have any ideas like that, do we? Well, I wonder, friends. I wonder if we have become fully emancipated from primitive or childish ideas of liberty. We are to be judged by the law of liberty.

Naught nobler is than to be free.
The stars of heaven are free
Because in amplitude of liberty
Their joy is to obey the laws.

All through God's vast creation, we see the beautiful results of following the law of liberty. Only in this planet is that idea mixed up, confused. Eventually, all that

confusion will be gone, and once again one pulse of harmony and gladness will beat throughout the vast creation.

So, as we think about liberty this morning, let us remember that there is a law of liberty. And liberty is not freedom without responsibility; liberty is the opportunity to choose.

And that brings me to the next point I'd like to study with you, friends. And that is, that nobody can take that away from you. Nobody can take away from you that liberty. We've just given an offering this morning for religious liberty. I wonder what that's for. Is that to keep people from taking away our liberty? No, no. Nobody, I repeat, can take away your liberty.

"Ah, but," somebody says, "they might put us in jail." Yes, they might. They put *Peter* in jail. They put *Paul* in jail. But they didn't take away their liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.

They banished John over to the Isle of Patmos, but they didn't keep the *angels* out. They didn't keep John from receiving the greatest revelations of his life. He had a fellowship with God.

We shall need to remember all this as we go into the repetition of the persecutions of the Dark Ages. When we are bound in chains, confined in dungeons, we shall need to realize that we are still free—free men, free women.

Now, this makes the dragon full of wrath. It's because of this that he goes forth with great fury. It is not enough to suit his satanic majesty that those who oppose him are bound or confined in prison. He wants the soul to be bound. But God has made the soul *free*.

They may burn Huss at the stake, but he dies *free*. They may crucify Peter with his head downward, but he dies *free*. They may confine one of God's children in prison for days, for months, for years. You remember one of those Huguenots in southern France during the Dark Ages, confined in a fortress for years. But on the wall of that old room had been written in French, "Resist. Resist."

And let me tell you: backed by the Spirit of God, inspired by God, the will of man is omnipotent. And there are not men enough in this world, nor devils in hell, to take away that freedom.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath
made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke
of bondage" Galatians 5:1.

Oh, friends, isn't it wonderful to be free? Wonderful to be free! And wonderful to know that no man, no *set* of men, can interfere with God's purpose for your life. That's echoed in other words in Romans 8:28:

“And we know that”

What?

“all things”

Do what?

“work together”

What for?

“for good”

Who to?

“them that love the Lord”

We love Him, don't we? So all things are working together for our good. Thank the Lord this morning, friends, for the great fact of liberty. Nothing can take it from you, except yourself. Now, you can sell out. You can become a slave by your choice.

There is a report on tobacco. It's quite a topic of conversation this week. It points out the fact that millions of men are slaves by their own choice. And they fully admit that they'd like to get loose and *can't*.

But we don't *have* to sell ourselves into slavery. We do not *have* to give up to the enemy. We do not *have* to obey his dictates. And *men* cannot force us. The Devil would like to, but he *can't*; God won't let him. *God* could force us, but He *won't*. He *invites*. He *pleads*. He *urges*. He *knocks* at the door. But the soul is *free*.

Some of you remember that painting of Jesus knocking at the door. It's been painted by various artists at different times. But we are told that one of those paintings, painted many years ago, was viewed on its completion by the friends of the artist. And as they stood there looking at it, one of them said, “Haven't you forgotten something?”

He said, “What?”

“Why,” they said, “there's no latch on the door.”

“Oh,” he said, “that's on the inside.”

God has put it there, my friends. Remember, no *man* can force that door. No *devil* can force that door. Inside you stand, and if that door is opened, you open it. Isn't that wonderful?

That's why John the Baptist could stand erect in the presence of earthly monarchs. He wasn't afraid of King Herod.

"Ah," but somebody says, "he put him in a dungeon."

Yes, but he was still free. You ask John the Baptist about it in a little while when we see him. Ask him if he wasn't free all the while. Of *course* he was. Herod was the slave. Something he wanted to do he couldn't do. He was held with a slavish infatuation for that woman that didn't belong to him. *He* was the slave. John the Baptist was *free*.

Now, there's something else about liberty that we ought to stop to think about this morning. I mentioned that liberty is not freedom without responsibility. So, I'd like to look for a few moments at that point of the *responsibility* that goes with liberty.

In Luke 16:2, we hear the words addressed to the steward in Christ's story:

"Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward" Luke 16:2.

While the fact of liberty is without controversy, let us remember that liberty is not something that belongs to us *inherently*. It is a gift from God. God has entrusted us with this precious gift, each one of us. And the greater the liberty that He gives us, the greater is our responsibility and accountability. Therefore, the more certain we become that nobody can take it from us, the more certain we need to be that some day we shall need to answer to God for how we used it.

Do you see we will not be able to bring any alibi if it wasn't used rightly? We cannot say then, "O Lord, I know that I didn't do this or that, but somebody *made* me." No, nobody made you.

And when the weakling would say, "Yes, but somebody *did* make me. Look, he was going to *whip* me if I didn't do it." Or, "He was going to *torture* me if I didn't do it." Or, "He was going to *kill* me if I didn't do it." God produces fifty million witnesses that men could take the beating and take the torturing and take the death rather than give up that freedom and stand for right.

Yes, there is a responsibility that goes with freedom, a responsibility that would not be ours could we be forced by human beings.

"Give an account of thy stewardship" Luke 16:2.

That comes at judgment day.

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil"
Ecclesiastes 12:14.

"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty" James 2:12.

Yes, we are to be judged by the law, the law of liberty. The freedom that has been given us, our use of it will be reviewed. Do you know what for? To see whether we shall have that liberty throughout eternity. And do you know something, friends? Everybody who loses that liberty at judgment day, every soul who loses life, shall I say, at that time will of his own choice vote that that's the proper thing to be done with him.

Read that closing chapter in *Great Controversy*. Get the picture when all the world, everyone who has ever lived on the earth, will be alive upon it all at once—Adam and Eve will be there, and Cain and Abel, Seth and Enoch and Methuselah, Noah, and Shem and Ham and Japheth, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, David and Saul, Elijah and Ahab, Peter and Paul, Caiaphas and Judas. They are all going to be there, every one. And upon the canvass of the heavens will be portrayed (I was about to compare it to a TV, but oh, friends, the TV is so little and so cheap and so inadequate). But there will be a living, moving, three-dimension picture, vast in every way. The *screen* will be vast. The *subject* will be vast, everything immense. And there we shall see that rebellion that began in heaven. There we shall see the creation of this world. There we shall watch the unfolding of the plan of salvation as well as the plans of the enemy. And every individual will see his own life, vividly and accurately depicted, nothing omitted.

When it's done, friends, the wicked, with unanimity that has never been seen before, will bow down and confess that there is only one thing to do with them, and that is to put an end to the life which they have so abused. In other words, God so values the power of choice that He has given to every individual, He puts such a price upon that individual liberty, that He will not take away life without the intelligent consent of the individual to whom He has entrusted it. The whole universe, every intelligence that ever has been, will vote together. There will be no dead-locked jury. No. Everyone, even Satan himself, will confess that the sentence is just, that God's law is perfect, and that only by obedience to that law can life and liberty be enjoyed.

I think that's wonderful, don't you? I cannot but admire the character of God. Now, He's waited for 6,000 years, and He's got to wait another thousand for all this to come to focus. But listen, friends, some of us have trouble waiting five minutes for somebody to make up their mind on a matter of conscience. Do you know we do? Yes. We want to tell it to them now and have them decide two things: first, that they see it, and second, that they are going to do it right now. Don't we? I am glad God is so patient, aren't you?

And remember this: Whenever we find lurking, or more than lurking, in our hearts the spirit to want to make people come around to our terms, even if what we're talking about is right and true, let's remember that God never borrows the weapons of hell to do the work of heaven. God is waiting patiently, knocking at the door. Let's wait with Him on the porch, what do you say, friends?

There is something so beautiful about the divine courtesy—waiting on the porch. And you and I, as we deal with individuals, may seek to reflect, to reveal, that divine courtesy. But with it let us remind people, and let us remind ourselves, there is coming the judgment day. There is coming the day of accounting.

“Give an account of thy stewardship” Luke 16:2.

Now let us turn to John 8, and I want to study how we get liberty. I want to study how these 50 million people in the United States that would like to quit smoking this morning, could quit; how they could be delivered from the slavery; and how somebody here can be delivered from the slavery of evil temper, or some other sin that chains you.

“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 for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” John 8:31-36.

Oh, yes. Here is freedom indeed. How does it come? It comes from the word of liberty.

You remember back in the ancient service there was a ceremony that typified this deliverance in Christ. A man might be a slave. He might have sold himself into slavery for a time. Or his land might have become alienated from him. But there came a time when the year of jubilee arrived. And then the bells rang, the trumpets were blown, and the Word of God was:

“Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof” Leviticus 25:10.

That’s inscribed on old Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, you know?

The law of Moses had right in the heart of it this thought of liberty. God showed in many ways that He was trying to make everybody free, get rid of slavery—slavery of man to man, slavery of man to sin, of man to Satan.

Jesus, speaking to these people in Jerusalem, says: “If you listen to what I tell you, if you will accept it, then you’ll be free. The truth will make you free.”

“Ah,” but they angrily retorted (some of them), “we’re not slaves. We’re Abraham’s seed.” And, sadly, Jesus looked at those angry countenances and he said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant, the slave, of sin.”

Isn’t he? Yes. These millions puffing away at something they know may give them lung cancer. Or, as Dr. Albert Oxner of New Orleans, the celebrated surgeon, says, “Anybody who smoke cigarettes will die of lung cancer unless he dies of something else first.” There you have it. But they puff on. Why? Slaves, poor souls.

But I repeat, friends, there are other things that make men slaves. *Any* sin makes a man a slave.

“Ah, but,” you say, “I thought that you said that every man is *free*.”

You are free to be made free. You have the liberty to become free, but not of your own power. No man of himself can break the chain. No man of himself can open the prison door. But Jesus was anointed that He might proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound. That’s what He said in His first sermon at Nazareth, as recorded in Luke 4. That’s what He offers to you and me this morning. And the various slaves, the man deepest down in the dungeon, can cry to Christ and find deliverance. That’s what happened that Sabbath morning in the synagogue at Capernaum, as that man under the dominion of evil spirits wandered in there, he heard Jesus talking. And deep down in his soul, there was a desire for freedom. But, the Devils that were in possession didn’t want to let go. And they cried out. But Jesus looked beneath those words of demons and He saw way down underneath the desire of that soul. Thank God, friends, every soul that cries to Jesus, even if it must be in the secret heart, is heard.

“Call unto me and I will answer thee” Jeremiah 33:3.

“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered” Joel 2:32.

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” John 8:36.

May I read you some beautiful comments from *The Desire of Ages*, 466.

(Because I want all of you to get this, and I know that reading tends to put people to sleep, especially people that are already *half*-asleep, will you stand with me for a moment, please?)

I think we’re prepared to listen to these wonderful words. Now, what were we talking about? Freedom, and how we *get* freedom. All right:

“Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see the beauty of truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan. While he flatters himself that he is following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness. Christ came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul. ‘If the Son therefore shall make ye free, ye shall be free indeed.’ ‘The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus’ sets us ‘free from the law of sin and death’” *The Desire of Ages*, 466.

Now, watch!

“In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed” *The Desire of Ages*, 466.

Not even “good force,” if I may use that expression. You see, that’s what some people don’t understand. They are wishing that God would take somebody they’re praying for and *make* them be good. Or it may be they’re wishing that God would take *them* and make *them* be good. No. That isn’t Heaven’s way. No external force is employed. Let me read on:

“In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself” *The Desire of Ages*, 466.

Oh, I think that’s wonderful, friends. Listen, if you ever give up the cigarette, *you* will have to put it away. If you ever quit that wine cup, *you* will have to lay it down. If you ever stop reading fiction, it is *your* hand that will put that book aside. And so on with all the long list of sin.

And listen, you cannot do it without God. That’s sure. You’re a slave if you’re in slavery. But listen, God won’t do it without you. Without Him we *cannot*; without us He *will* not, for it would violate the whole thing we’re studying about this morning—liberty, freedom.

“The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan’s control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God” *The Desire of Ages*, 466

Isn’t that wonderful, friends? Why, yes.

Here is some devil that years ago I invited in. I thought he was such a beautiful devil when he came around and knocked at my door. And he promised me all kinds of nice things, so I used my freedom of choice and I opened the door and let him in. There he is. Can I say to him this morning, “Get out?” No, I can’t.

“Ah,” you say, “but I thought you said you were free.”

Yes, I *was* free. What did I do with my freedom? I used it to let that devil in, and there he is. And he mocks me. He kicks me when he gets ready. He tells me what he wants me to do, and I have to, pretty well, dance to his music. I don’t like him. I wish I could get rid of him, or do I? Well, that’s the question. What can I do about it? There is one thing and only one thing. I can cry to Jesus. He came to

preach deliverance to the captives. He came to open the prison. He came to cast out the demons. And I can cry to Him. And what will He do?

And right at this point is the most important thing in the sermon this morning. Many people have this picture: that the soul just sort of sits there, you understand, and says, "Lord, I see I can't do it. I can't do anything about it. You will have to take over and drive the Devil out." That is the idea that some people have of the Gospel. That isn't the picture at all, my friends. No.

"The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself" *The Desire of Ages*, page 466.

"Well," someone says, "I don't understand it."

Well, let's *study* it. Expulsion, what does that mean? Well, in plain English, that means "kick him out." Who's going to kick him out? *You* are.

"Oh, but I can't. I've tried a thousand times."

Well, this time you are going to *do* it. What's the difference? Well, you have asked *Jesus* to come in. You know you can't do it *without* Him. You're fully convinced of that. And so you cry to Jesus, and He comes. But when He comes in, do you know what He says? "Do you really want to get rid of that devil?"

"Yes."

"All right. Tell him to go. Kick him out."

"Oh, but I've done that over and over again."

"Never mind. This time he is going to do it."

"Why?"

"Because I am with you."

And when the will of man cooperates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. What does omnipotent mean? All powerful. And no devil can stand in the way of omnipotent power. Oh, this is what the slaves of evil habits need to see, friends. There is power in Jesus, but they must see how it operates. It operates not *apart* from the will of man, but *in* and *through* the will of man.

Listen, is there somebody here this morning in slavery? Not to a piece of tobacco, not to a glass of whiskey, but just in slavery to doubt and gloom? My, my. I'd almost rather be a slave to a cigarette than that. Do you know why? Well, you can throw a cigarette in the stove, but just how do you throw away doubt and gloom?

Let me tell you there is only one way in the world to get rid of it, and that's to cry to Jesus and let Him in, and let the light of His love banish darkness. But remember, the expulsion of sin is the act of the soul. And gloom and doubt are sin,

friends. They may not be as ugly looking as vice and crime, but oh, my, wouldn't you hate to live eternally in doubt and gloom? That *would* be eternal torment, wouldn't it? Yes. Thank God we're not going to have that trouble. And it is your privilege to say to that doleful devil in the corner of your mind, "Go."

"Ah," you say "he won't listen to me." He won't listen to you if you speak of yourself. But if you invoke the name of Jesus, if you say, "In the name of Jesus Christ, be gone. I shall walk at *liberty* because I have given my heart to God. I have opened the windows of the soul heavenward. I believe the sunshine of love is streaming into my soul. I will be free. I am free. I'll stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made me free," you can talk yourself, sing yourself, pray yourself, and live in the light. Will you do it? Will you take that will, that choice—which to God is so valuable that He gave His only Son that you might have the chance to use it, that it might be preserved inviolate—will you take that choice and use it *for* Him, *with* Him, in *harmony* with Him?

Don't forget that statement:

"As the will of man cooperates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent" *Reflecting Christ*, page 298.

Friends, I think that is marvelous, don't you? So the expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.

Now, I must stop, so that *you* can have time to say something. Why, it seems to me, friends, if I had been sitting here listening, I'd just be longing for the chance to get on my feet and say something about this. Are you?

[A testimony service follows.]

"I Surrender All." Isn't that nice? What is the number, Brother? 573, "I Surrender All." That's what to do with the will. Surrender it to Jesus, and remember: that's the way to be free—the *only* way to be free. "I Surrender All." Thank God for a will that *can* surrender. What do you say? But remember, when you surrender, He doesn't make a slave out of you. You're always free. You can always go back to the Devil if you choose to. We're not *going* to, are we?

Now, dear ones, as we sing, listen! If there's somebody here this morning who needs to surrender to Jesus, either for the first time or because you've lost that sense of liberty, that full freedom, and you'd like to come back to Him this morning; if there's something that stands between you and God, as the Doctor says, if there is something, some rubbish there, wouldn't you like to come and just give it to Jesus this morning, give *yourself* to Jesus, and ask Him for that help, without which you are powerless? Is anybody like that here this morning that Jesus is calling? You just come up and kneel down here, and we'll pray for you as we close this service.

All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live;

I surrender all, I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender,
Humbly at His feet I bow,
Worldly pleasures all forsaken;
Take me, Jesus, take me now;

I surrender all, I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

Just think, dear ones, to give us this opportunity cost the life of the Son of God —I mean the opportunity to choose to be free. If there's one hesitating soul this morning, why not get the freedom that Jesus paid such a marvelous price to give you? Why not have it? It's offered to you, a free gift, but oh, you must take it. You must take it.

“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered” Joel 2:32.

I cannot read your mind, your heart; Jesus can and does. If you are free, free in Jesus, thank Him for it. If you are not, come and call on Him for freedom. Ask Him for deliverance.

“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered” Joel 2:32.

Come as we sing this next sweet stanza:

All to Jesus I surrender,
Make me Savior, wholly Thine,
Let me feel the Holy Spirit,
Truly know that Thou art mine;

I surrender all, I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender;
Now I feel the sacred flame.
O the joy of full salvation!
Glory, glory to His name!

I surrender all, I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

Now, before we pray I just want to say a word to these who are kneeling here at the altar, and to all. Dear ones, remember, Jesus loves you as though you were the only one in all this world. You, dear children, every one of you, is more precious to Jesus than all the stars that shine on high. He would have come down for you just like that shepherd came out over the mountains for the lamb. He would have come for just one of you. Is that true, friends? Every one of us. Isn't that wonderful?

Now, dear ones, remember, if you are seeking Him, no question about you finding Him, because He's been seeking you all the while. So He says:

"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" John
6:37.

So as we pray for you, you pray for yourself and believe that Jesus hears you. Let there be no doubt about it. Do not have any question about it. Jesus says:

"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" John
6:37.

That is, it's *impossible* for Him to cast you out. He hears you. He accepts you. He gives you His life, His power, and He will help you to go out from this chapel this morning free in Him. Put your will on His side. Say, "I will believe, I *do* believe, that Jesus loves me and helps me, and blesses me."

Will the congregation kneel with these as we pray.

Kind Father, we thank Thee with all our hearts that the trumpets of freedom are sounding, proclaiming liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof. We thank Thee for the good news of deliverance through Christ that we have heard from the Holy Word this morning. And now we come to Jesus, the blessed Christ, who gave His life on the cross that we might have this liberty. We are sorry for every sin that has held us in bondage, and this morning, we are giving them up. We are asking Thee to come in and energize our souls that we may, from this moment on, live the life of freedom and victory. Greatly bless, especially, these who are kneeling at Thine altar. Assure them of Thy love, Thy presence, Thy acceptance. May they, this moment, go free in Christ. May they know that there are not men enough in this world, nor devils in hell, to force them to transgress. May they count themselves Thy loving, accepted children, and go home happy in the love of God. Dismiss us all with Thy blessing and may we share with others the good things Thou hast shared with us. Bring us back to the table of the Lord that we may share in that blessed communion, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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