

Free as a bird...?

By David Radcliff

A skit for two performers and a reader based on passages from the book of Romans speaking of our freedom in Christ, and asking the question whether freedom sometimes leads to new kinds of enslavement. Related responsive reading follows.

(Two people sit listening as reader begins)

Reader: In our service today, we are proclaiming the freedom we have in Christ. But just what is this freedom? Free to be what? Free to go where? Free to do what with our lives? Consider these questions as we listen to the scripture from the beginning of the 8th chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

(As reading is finished, one gets up to leave, perhaps going part way down the aisle.)

Hey! What are you doing?

I'm out of here.

But...but...you can't just get up and leave!

You heard what the guy said—we're set free—free to go. And I'm going!

Wait a second—that's not what it means. You can't just take off.

Oh yes I can! Just watch me.

Freedom—it doesn't really mean you're...free.

Excuse me?! I believe that's exactly what that verse is saying. "Christ Jesus has set you free." Free as a bird. And this bird you cannot change.

Wait a second—isn't that a song...?

Name that group.

Hmmm...Lynyrd Skynyrd! Hold on—what's classic rock got to do with this?

Everything! It's all about being free to go. "Time for me to fly." "Get your motor running, head out on the highway..."

Not so fast. It's fine to "head out on the highway"—but where are you going?

What difference does that make?

You might not be free at all—you might just think you're free.

What do you mean by that?!

Because sometimes we think we're free, but we're just slaves and don't know it.

Oh please! Alright, give me an example.

So if you were completely free, what would you do?

Buy a new car, give up my job, build a big house at the lake with a TV screen that covered the whole wall.

You'd be a slave.

Slave to whom?!

Master Card. What else would you do?

I'd sleep til noon, eat all the ice cream I wanted, and sit in the recliner watching NASCAR.

Slave.

To whom?

Weight Watchers. What else?

I'd get me a HUGE pick-up truck, then cruise up to the drive-through window blasting Britney Spears from my massive speakers.

Oops, you did it again—slave.

To...?

Big Oil, Big Mac, Big Mess.

What's the point of being free if you can't just do what you want?!

What's the point of being free if what you want to do just makes you a slave again?

So how do you keep from being this "slave" you keep talking about?

The point is: It's not just free *from*, but also free *to*.

Free to...what?!

Free to live for the things that really matter to you. Free to step away from the pressure society puts on you to conform. Free to talk about justice and peace and protecting God's earth for future generations when everyone else only seems to be thinking about me/more/now. Free to follow Jesus wherever he leads you.

That Jesus—now there's a free dude. Nobody or nothing could tell him what to do. Standing up for the little guy—sticking it to The Man. He, like, got his marching orders directly from God! That's what I want to be like.

Then you're on your way.

On my way where?

Who knows—but some place interesting, 'cause you'll going there with Jesus. Who, by the way, sets a pretty good pace—you know, since he's so busy "sticking it to The Man." So I'd say you'd better "get your motor running..."

Responsive reading

One: There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

All: Praise the Lord! We are free from the things of this world that enslave us in the name of freedom: freedom to want, freedom to spend, freedom to hate, freedom to sin. Thank God for setting us free from this bondage!

One: For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that

the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

All: Jesus' example and the presence of the Spirit—this is what sets us free, lifts us up, shows us the way to go, and gives us the courage to speak.

One: The creation also waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

All: We know that God's earth longs for a time of peace and freedom. May God use us to restore and protect the goodness of the creation, for its own sake, for our sake, for the sake of our children, for God's sake.

One: Thanks be to God for our freedom in Christ.

All: Thanks be to God, our creator and redeemer!

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