

FREE FROM TYRANNY

(Phil. 4:20-23)

Introduction:

1. Consider the context of Paul's closing comments. Paul is in prison in Rome and makes sure to highlight the fact that some of Caesar's own household had become Christians!!
2. This is a great example of a simple truth: Christians are free from tyranny!
3. Let us consider some commands/principles, some instructions, and the goal that relates to this truth.

Discussion:

I. The Command/Principle.

- A. "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:4-7).
- B. Authority is of God.
 1. We are to be content and obey civil governments (Rom. 13:1-7; cp. Matt. 22:21).
 2. We need to understand the big picture and the example our Lord gave us (1 Pet. 2:11-25).
 3. There is an exception to our civil obedience (Acts 5:29).

II. The Instruction.

- A. The truth of our reality sets us free from tyranny.
 1. This physical life is but for a while and is not the end all (Jas. 4:14; 1 Pet. 1:24, 25).
 2. The spiritual life that continues is forever and thus IS the end all (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10).
 3. The things that must be first and foremost on our minds and pursued by us are Matt. 5-7, not 401Ks and civil liberties.
- B. The history of God's people sets us free from tyranny.
 1. Consider God's people in Egypt: they prospered (Ex. 1:7) and even plundered (Ex. 12:36).
 2. Consider God's people in captivity: they prospered (Dan. 2:48, 49; 3:30; 5:29; 6:28; Esth. 10:3; Neh. 2:1) and even plundered (Ezra 1:4, 7ff).
 3. Consider God's people under Roman rule. The Great Commission was aided by the overlords not hindered. Persecution and tribulation served to spread the faith not stop it.
- C. The Bible's teaching on slavery is so contrary to our American thinking.
 1. Slavery is an economic system at its roots, and as such is even regulated in the Bible (Ex. 21; Lev. 22).
 2. Consider the NT admonitions to slaves (1 Cor. 7:20-24; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; 1 Tim. 6:1-6; remember 1 Pet. 2:18-25).

III. The Goal.

- A. Even under the most wicked of governments God's people are free.
 1. Free to worship God. If allowed to worship = contentment/influence. If not allowed to worship = still worshipping even unto death (aka paradise).
 2. Free to serve God. What laws are there against doing good (Gal. 5:22, 23)? If there are such laws, Christians cannot be stopped from doing good, all that can happen is an end to their labors for the Lord.
- B. Consider again the fullness of Rom. 8:31-39.

Conclusion:

1. Only we can imprison ourselves. Only we can prevent ourselves from worshipping and serving God.
2. The only master who can turn us away from God and heaven is in the mirror. The truth has made us free!
3. Invitation.

MORE ON “FREE FROM TYRANNY”

1. The reality of our kingdom frees us from physical tyranny.
 - A. Not of this world (John 18:36).
 - B. Citizenship in heaven (Phil. 3:20).
 - C. Physical life is but a mist, like the grass of the field; don't get too caught up in it.
 - D. Our suffering here makes us stronger for the walk to THERE (Jas. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:3-9).
 - E. Truly, if God be for us who can stand against us?

2. Now we must use the freedom and opportunities we have to make life better for all, but within limits, understanding our reality.

3. The hard truth is that our suffering and not responding in kind may be God's way of helping the tyrants to see their error. Consider 1 Pet. 3:8-22.

4. John the apostle faced some of the most intense persecution/tribulation, and yet he is affectionately known as the apostle of love! Why? It looks like he “got it” (Rev. 22:20, 21).

5. We, today, must be on guard against the “soft-tyranny” of cultural decay. It sure appears that true tyranny and persecution/tribulation is coming, but until then we must take the time God has given us to strengthen our faith for the coming storm (or at least in order to survive the incessant waves). How? 2 Pet. 1:2-11; Rom. 12; Matt. 5-7 all are good methods.