

Letter 598
The Command of God To Be Free
2017-06-05

Dear **Jesus**,

In 1996 the Lord Holy Spirit helped me understand something which troubled me.

Years earlier, in say around 1993, You formed a small fellowship of Believers who, for one reason or another, found themselves without any regular organized Church Fellowship.

Each of us were without any Church Home, yet we all desired to obey Your Word about not forsaking the gathering together.

So we started to meet together on a semi-regular basis. It was indeed a Motley Crew.

Two of our number, a Police Officer and his and Wife with sons and daughters, had been Pastoral Leaders in a California Evangelical "Mega-church", but had moved to the Pacific Northwest to pursue Reformed Theology.

Another was a homeless young man who worked sometimes as a Confidential Informant to the Police Officer.

Two more of our group, a Husband and Wife couple, had formerly been Pastoral Leaders in the United Pentecostal denomination, but had left that Church, after discerning that it was more of a Cult than a Church. They too wanted to pursue Reformed Theology.

There were two Intellectuals and their wives, one of whom made his living as a Tree Topper, and later earned his doctorate in Human Relationships. The other specialized in identifying Business Opportunities, and had been recognized as a City Planner in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Then there was the 911 Operator. He joined us periodically for our robust knock-down drag-out conversations on what the Bible meant.

Then there was the Skater, a young man in his early twenties who spent most of his free time finding places to run his skate board. He was engaged to a young woman who also was a skater and sometimes joined us.

And finally there were the Janitors; my friend (CB1), and me.

It was through this semi-loose Association that I discovered Reformed Theology and began studying it for myself. I purchased books by various leading Reformed authors such as R. C. Sproul, Jonathan Edwards, and John Calvin.

I even went to a one day conference where R. C. Sproul was the speaker. I learned that one of the main disagreements which helped to define what Reformed Theology is, has to do with the Sovereignty of God versus the Free Will of Man.

John Calvin emphasized God's Sovereignty, while another theologian, Jacobus Arminius, emphasized the Free Will of Man. And from these two seeming adversarial points of view was born two "isms": Calvinism, and Arminianism.

These two divergent theological camps then became warring factions within the Church, causing much division, and giving space to the Devil, who went about doing great violence to the souls of many.

It was while I was considering all this that I became frustrated with the disagreement as a whole, and wanted to see if there was a possibility of a third viewpoint that didn't cause division within the Body of Christ.

During my thoughts on the matter, the Lord Holy Spirit began to share His thoughts with me, which led me to write a treatise on the subject.

I originally entitled the Treatise "God's Sovereignty and Man's Free Will", but I think the title of this Letter is more accurate, "The Command To Be Free". Attached below is exactly what I wrote at that time.

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God's Sovereignty and Man's Free Choice

A Mechanic and an Artist, both Christians, were discussing what the Kingdom of God meant to each. The Mechanic said, "God makes everything happen, both good and bad. He pushes the buttons, turns the screws, puts the 'pedal to the metal'. Like it says in the Bible, "And the LORD God commanded the man; ..." Gen 2:16 (NIV)

The Artist, with a look of surprise replied, "No, no! God gives each creature the freedom to choose what they want to do, like it says in the Bible, "... you are free to eat from any tree in the garden..." Gen 2:16 (NIV)

A Janitor standing nearby, also a Believer, overheard this exchange and thought to himself, "Hmm, this reminds me of a relationship I once had with a Girl. I knew exactly what I wanted but I could never figure out what She wanted. Maybe I should have asked Her."

The Spirit in each of them began to whisper in their hearts. "Give preference to your brother's viewpoint. Listen to what he says. Then try to serve him in a way that he will appreciate and enjoy. For it is written that "Love is..."

At just that moment a Prophet happened by and began to Prophecy to the three of them saying, "The Mystery of the Kingdom of God is made known in the Living, rather than in the talking. As it is written, "I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life".

(The editor wrote, "Yeah, I agree, 'cause 'talk is cheap' and lunch is five bucks".)

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As You can see, the Mechanic and the Artist were both quoting from the exact same Scripture to support their point of view. But they both were gravitating to those parts of the verse which resonated more closely with their own personality, as revealed by their vocation.

The Apostle Paul wrote something which brings the two warring factions together and administers reconciliation to both. It is found in this text:

*Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you **the whole counsel of God.***

Acts 20:26-27 (ESV)

Here is the full Scripture which the two men were using as their proof-texts for their own positions:

*And the Lord God **commanded** the man, saying, You may **freely** eat of every tree of the garden; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and blessing and calamity you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*

Genesis 2:16-17 (AMPC)

And so, the Command to be Free began before The Death, and was restored with the Life of the Messiah Who said:

*Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be **free indeed.***

John 8:34-36 (NKJV)

The commandment of God to be free then can only be found in You.

Thank You Jesus for making all of us who trust in You, Free Indeed.

Blessings...

R. C. Theophilus