



Church of Christ

June 29, 2003

204 Dix Road Jefferson City, MO 65109

Heart to Heart...

We are coming upon July 4, a celebration of the independence of the United States. We talk about the freedom we have that others don't. However, there is a common misconception concerning the nature of true freedom. Most define freedom as being able to do what you want, go wherever you want being free from *all* restraints. This is not freedom; it is *self-centeredness*! It is born out of *selfishness*, which is rooted in sin!

Jesus spoke to the Jews about being free in John 8. They responded, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" (John 8:33) Jesus answers, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin." (John 8:34) Sin enslaves a person! We don't think sin works that way. We don't think of sin as a master. When we sin, we usually think we are in control. The sin will go no further than we want it to, and we can stop it at any time. We, like Eve, who looked at the fruit on the forbidden tree as a means to satisfy her thoughts and desires, but could not see the terrible consequences of her choice, are blinded by the power of sin. (Gen. 3)

Sin is pleasurable! "For we once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." (Titus 3:5) Not only is sin pleasurable but it deceives and enslaves. It is like bait to a fish, a quick and easy gratification, but hidden within is the deadly barb! Once we take hold of sin, it takes hold of us and drags us along. What we think of as being in control and free is really our master! It takes us places we never planned to go and causes destruction in our lives that we never thought possible. Our own *self-centered* freedom has now trapped us and we are sold into bitter slavery. The proof is seen when we fake and hide so others don't find out who we are or what we are really doing. Sin and selfishness promise freedom, but only deliver bondage and heartache. That's the power of sin! That's misery, not freedom! Why do you hear so many, who claim to live in freedom, speak of how unhappy they are in their personal lives? Marriages, jobs and families are in constant turmoil. That's the bitterness that sin offers.

True freedom is not found in doing as we please, going where we want and living the way we choose. It is found in being released from the bondage of sin through Jesus. "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36) His death is the only way to freedom. Only Jesus can break the bonds of sin. He is the only One that allows us to rise above all our selfish desires, finding joy and contentment beyond our thoughts! "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matt. 16:25) Until one surrenders to the Lord, they are surrendered to sin. Think about it!!!

Brent