

# THE MEANING OF LIBERTY

Sunday, July 5, 2026 -- Pastor Andrew Coleman

**JOHN 8:36** (Jesus speaking...) English Standard Version (ESV)

*So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

## KEY WORDS:

LIBERTY, FREEDOM, JUSTICE, OPPORTUNITY, HAPPINESS, LIFE  
TYRANNY, BONDAGE, INJUSTICE, OPPRESSION, SORROW, DEATH  
τύραννος (*tyrannos*), meaning a ruler who seized and holds power without lawful right.

## I. SEE WHY GENEROUS LIBERTY FOR HUMANITY IS SO UNCOMMON:

A) In a fallen/sinful world, POWER LEADS TO CORRUPTION and TYRANNY unless influenced by something greater than sin.

***"Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."***

Stated by John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, 1st Baron Acton in an 1887 letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton.

***"The greater the power, the more dangerous the abuse."***

The American Founders largely agreed with this sentiment.

For example, James Madison wrote *"If men were angels, no government would be necessary."*

His point was that because rulers are fallen human beings, power must be restrained by constitutional checks and balances.

***"Power reveals rather than corrupts."***

Robert Caro famously wrote: *"Power doesn't always corrupt. Power always reveals."*

***"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."***

This is commonly attributed to Abraham Lincoln.

***"Those who seek power are the least suited to possess it."***

Douglas Adams in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*: *"Anyone who is capable of getting themselves made President should on no account be allowed to do the job."*

***"Power intoxicates."***

Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and later Christian thinkers all warned that unchecked authority easily feeds pride and tyranny.

### VERY FEW Noted Exceptions in World History:

Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus (c. 519–430 BC)

Lucius Paullus Macedonicus (c. 229–160 BC)

William Wilberforce (England)

George Washington (1732–1799)

### In Biblical History:

Moses (Let someone else!)

David (Refused to kill Saul)

John the Baptist (HE must increase...!)

Our Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 2)

B) GOD'S WORD never says 'power corrupts' because it recognizes a greater reality: Sin corrupts. Sin's corruption leads to bondage, injustice, tyranny, theft, oppression, violence, suffering and death.

JOHN 10:10 Jesus said...

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;  
I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*

Jeremiah 17:9 — The Root Problem Is the Human Heart

*"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"  
The problem is not the throne, the heart that sits on the throne.*

Mark 7:20–23 Sin Comes From Within Jesus said,

*"What comes out of a person is what defiles him... For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery... pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within."*

Genesis 6:5

*"The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."  
God doesn't say civilization became corrupt, but man's heart was corrupt.*

Ecclesiastes 8:11

*"...the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil."*

Romans 7:18 The Apostle Paul declares the pervasive nature of sin...

*13 Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! **It was sin**, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.... 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.*

So the whole problem both personally and societally for humanity is our **bondage to sin and death**.

## II. SEE THAT OUR FIRST AND GREATEST NEED IS THE LIBERTY AND FREEDOM THAT ONLY CHRIST CAN BRING.

LUKE 4:16-21 Jesus begins His ministry by reading Isaiah 61:1-2

*16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,*

*18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,*

*19 To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

} Isaiah 61:1-2

*20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." **BOOM!!***

## II. SEE THAT OUR FIRST AND GREATEST NEED IS THE LIBERTY AND FREEDOM THAT ONLY CHRIST CAN BRING.

**JOHN 8:31-36** Jesus gets to the heart of our greatest need.

**31** So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." **33** They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

**34** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. **35** The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. **36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Jesus brings in stark contrast the BONDAGE of sin and death with the FREEDOM of His sacrifice that brings truth and life.

**GALATIANS 5:1, 13-25** Paul reveals we are finally free to live holy lives!

**1** For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

**13** For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **14** For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **15** But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

**16** But I say, walk by **the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. **17** For the desires of the flesh are against **the Spirit**, and the desires of the **Spirit** are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. **18** But if you are led by **the Spirit**, you are not under the law. **19** Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, **21** envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. **22** But the fruit of **the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. **24** And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** If we live by **the Spirit**, let us also keep in step with **the Spirit.**

For those who have been freed from sin and death, they now have the Spirit that empowers them to treat others rightly and live a holy life.

ALL FREEDOM and LIBERTY in the world flows from this source of power and selflessness.

The greatest influence toward FREEDOM and LIBERTY in the world has been the Gospel.

Where the Gospel has flourished, freedom has flourished.

Where the Gospel wanes, freedom eventually fades.

### APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES:

Come to Christ where true freedom will save and restore.

Pray for a Spiritual Awakening in America for the glory of God and good of people.