



The Kingdom Perspective

Freedom and Fetters

Hello, this is Pastor Don of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to The Kingdom Perspective.

As modern Western people, we tend to define freedom as the ability to do what we please—what is right in our own eyes. However, I'd like to suggest that true freedom is not as easy as getting what we want. Sometimes what we want is not good for us—even destructive. Anyone who has ever dealt with a child can testify to that truth. And sadly, many of our adult desires never escape our childhood foolishness.

The great Edmund Burke (1729-1797) even questioned how well such a definition would work in the civil realm.

“Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites. ... Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.” (Edmund Burke)

Indeed, the Bible seems to suggest the same thing. For example, in the book of Judges, the children of Israel are in a mess. Having just come into the Promised Land, they did not put “moral chains upon their own appetites” but pursued and subjected themselves to the false gods of the Canaanites. Moral and civil chaos ensued. The children of Israel became slaves of their own desires. Their false gods became their own fetters.

The book ends with the haunting line, in what we might call today a “mic-drop-moment: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25).

Something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

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