

Semiquincentennial

“The [government official] is not, by virtue of his office, to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form of religion, or doctrine: but to leave Christian religion free, to every man’s conscience ... for Christ only is the king, and lawgiver of the church and conscience.”

~ John Smyth, 1612

“Government has no more to do with the religious opinions of men, than it has with the principles of mathematics. ... Let every man speak freely without fear, maintain the principles that he believes, worship according to his own faith, either one God, three Gods, no God, or twenty Gods; and let government protect him in so doing.”

~ John Leland, 1791

The First Amendment to our Constitution ...

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ...”

The Paradox of Christian Liberty ...

It is in giving up the freedom to pursue our own way that we experience the true freedom that God intends.

The Paradox of Freedom

Galatians 5:13-15

Galatians 5:1

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

- 1. We are free to look beyond ourselves, rather than indulging the flesh.**

**The flesh can be described as an
“inner desire for selfish gratification
at the expense of God and others.”**

antinomian

anti + nomos

Romans 6:1-2

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

indulging the flesh

→ doing what I want, because I can

- 1. We are free to look beyond ourselves, rather than indulging the flesh.**
- 2. We are free to love God by willingly and sacrificially serving others.**

“[Serving others in love involves seemingly insignificant works like] teaching the erring; comforting the afflicted; encouraging the weak; helping [one’s] neighbor in whatever way [you] can; bearing with his rude manners and impoliteness; putting up with the annoyances, labors, and the ingratitude and contempt of men in both church and state; obeying the magistrates; treating one’s parents with respect; being patient in the home with a cranky wife and an unmanageable family, and the like.”

~ Martin Luther, ca. 1540

Mark 10:45

“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Exodus 21:2-4

“If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. 3 If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself.”

Exodus 21:5-6

“And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: 6 Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.”

As a believer, I am no longer enslaved to my selfish desires. In Christ, I have the power and the desire to live my life for the sake of others.

Matthew 22:37-39

“... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Romans 13:8-10

**“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another:
for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.
9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou
shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt
not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet;
and if there be any other commandment, it is
briefly comprehended in this saying, namely,
Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 10
Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore
love is the fulfilling of the law.”**

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- 2. We are free to love God by willingly and sacrificially serving others.**