

The Spire

JULY 2024



A word from Pastor Doug What Is Christian Freedom?

The Bible states emphatically in [Galatians 5:1](#) that believers are free in Christ: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free” ([Galatians 5:1](#)). Before Jesus died on a cross, God’s people lived under a detailed system of laws that served as a moral compass to guide their lives. The Law, while powerless to grant salvation or produce true freedom, nevertheless pointed the way to Jesus Christ ([Galatians 3:19–24](#)). Through His sacrificial death, Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law, setting believers free from the law of sin and death. God’s laws are now written in our hearts through the Spirit of God, and we are free to follow and serve Christ in ways that please and glorify Him ([Romans 8:2–8](#)). In a nutshell, this is the definition of Christian freedom.

An important aspect of Christian freedom is our responsibility not to return to living under the Law. The apostle Paul compared this to slavery: “Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery” ([Galatians 5:1](#)). Continuing to live under the Law after salvation is merely a legalistic form of religion. We cannot earn righteousness through the Law; rather, the Law’s purpose was to define our sin and show our need of a Savior. Christian freedom involves living not under the burdensome obligations of the Law but under God’s grace: “For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace” ([Romans 6:14](#)).

Service Times

Sunday School Hour.....9:30 – 10:30 am

Worship Service.....10:45 – 12 noon

Wednesday Night Prayer.....6:30 – 7:30 am

In Christ, we are free from the Law's oppressive system, we are free from the penalty of sin, and we are free from the power of sin. Christian freedom is *not* a license to sin. We are free in Christ but not free to live however we want, indulging the flesh: "For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love" ([Galatians 5:13, NLT](#)). Believers aren't free to sin, but free to live holy lives in Christ.

Christian freedom is one of the many paradoxes of the Christian faith. True freedom means willingly becoming a slave to Christ, and this happens through relationship with Him ([Colossians 2:16–17](#)). In [Romans 6](#), Paul explains that, when a believer accepts Christ, he or she is baptized by the Spirit into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. At that moment, the believer ceases to be a slave to sin and becomes a servant of righteousness: "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness" ([Romans 6:17–18, ESV](#)).

Only Christians know [true freedom](#): "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" ([John 8:36](#)). But what does Christian freedom look like in a practical sense? What are we free to do and not do? What can we watch on TV? What can we eat and drink? What can we wear to the beach? What about smoking and drinking? Are there limits to Christian freedom?

In [1 Corinthians 10](#), the apostle Paul gives a practical illustration of Christian freedom: "'Everything is permissible'—but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible'—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others" ([1 Corinthians 10:23–24, NIV84](#)).

In writing to the church in Corinth, Paul mentions members who were attending meals in pagan temples, just as they had done before receiving Christ. They felt free to continue participating because they thought these festivals were merely a normal part of the social culture. They didn't see their actions as pagan worship.

Paul laid out several warnings, reminding the Corinthians of Israel's dangerous flirtation with idolatry in the Old Testament. Then he handled the practical concern of eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols.

"[Everything is permissible](#)," the Corinthians were saying. True, Paul says; Christians have a great deal of freedom in Christ. However, not everything is beneficial or constructive. Our freedom in Christ must be balanced by a desire to build up and benefit others. When deciding how to exercise our Christian freedom, we ought to seek the good of others before our own good.

In Judaism, restrictions were placed on purchasing meats in the market. Jews could only buy and eat kosher meats. Paul said believers were free in Christ to buy and eat any meat ([1 Corinthians 10:25–26](#)). However, if the issue of meat sacrificed to idols came up, believers were to follow a higher law. Love is what limits Christian freedom.

A little later in the chapter, Paul wrote about eating meat as a guest in someone's home. Christians are free to eat whatever they are served without questions of conscience ([1 Corinthians 10:27](#)). But, if someone brings up that the meat has been offered to an idol, it is better not to eat it for the sake of the person who raised the issue of conscience (verse 28). While believers have freedom to eat the meat, they are compelled to consider what's best for those who are observing their behavior.

[Romans 14:1–13](#) raises a key determiner in understanding the limits of Christian freedom. In the passage, Paul again brings up the issue of eating meat sacrificed to idols and also observing certain holy days. Some of the believers felt freedom in Christ in these areas while others did not. Their differing perspectives were causing quarrels and disunity. Paul emphasized that unity and love in the body of Christ are more important than anyone's [personal convictions](#) or Christian liberty: "Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister" ([Romans 14:13](#)).

Essentially, Paul's message to the New Testament believers and to us today is this: even if we believe we are right and have Christian freedom in an area, if our actions will cause another brother or sister to stumble in his or her faith, we are to refrain out of love.

Blessings, *Pastor Doug*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 PM	2 Men's Bible Study 6:30 PM	3	4	5	6
7 Business Meeting Prayer Meeting 5:00 PM	8 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 PM	9 Men's Bible Study 6:30 PM	10	11 Constitution Committee 6:00 PM	12	13
14 Lord's Supper Harmony Home 2 PM Prayer Meeting 5:00 PM	15 	16 	17	18 6:00 - 8:30 PM	19	20 Youth Trip to Denver
21 Prayer Meeting 5:00 PM	22 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 PM	23 Men's Bible Study 6:30 PM	24 R.A.G. @ 6:00 PM	25 Celebrate Committee @ 6 PM	26	27
28 Prayer Meeting 5:00 PM	29 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 PM	30 Men's Bible Study 6:30 PM	31			

Fun Facts About July

Around 150 million hot dogs are consumed on Fourth of July. It is estimated that \$6.78 billion will be spent on food this year reported by the National Retail Federation (NRF).

When the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, 2.5 million new people lived in the U.S. Now 243 years later, 327.2 million people live in the U.S. per google 2018.

Americans spend \$1 billion on fireworks annually. Alabama imports roughly \$19,400,000 according to CNBC.

More than 14,000 firework displays are put on across the country on July Fourth with Macy's Fourth of July Fireworks Display being the largest in the United States.

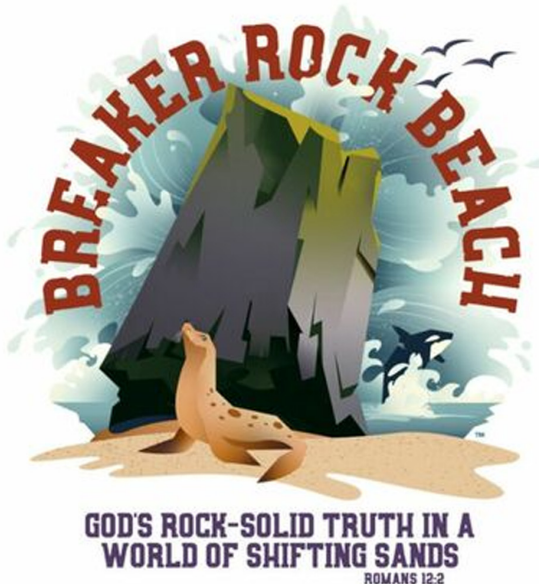
In 1804, the White House hosted its first Fourth of July celebration.

August 2, 1776 is when most of signers formally signed the Declaration.

Upcoming EVENTS



At Breaker Rock Beach, kids will learn to recognize the difference between what the world says is true and what God says is true. Kids will be challenged to know that God's truth never changes—even when it's radically different from what some people say. They'll discover that God does not want them to be conformed to this age, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds so that they can discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2). Adventure awaits each day as kids explore tide pools, spot orcas, fly kites, and watch the mighty waves crash up against the immovable Breaker Rock!



VBS 2024

June 15th – 19th

6:00 – 8:30 PM



Name: _____ Date: _____



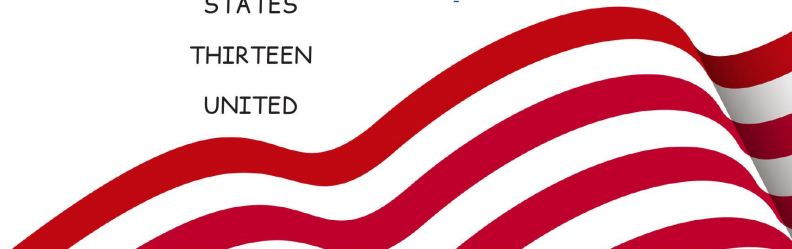
DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

4TH OF JULY

ADAMS
AMERICA
BARBECUE
COLONIES
CONGRESS
DECLARATION
EQUALITY
FIREWORKS
FOURTH
FREEDOM
HOTDOGS
INDEPENDENCE
JEFFERSON
JULY
LIBERTY
NATION
PARADE
REVOLUTION
RIGHTS

S	R	G	C	Q	G	Z	I	Q	E	Q	B	J	U	L	Y	P	S	L
N	O	I	T	A	R	A	L	C	E	D	X	A	U	M	R	A	A	I
L	U	M	V	D	O	M	E	X	G	L	J	A	L	E	F	R	V	B
C	V	C	X	J	E	F	F	E	R	S	O	N	V	C	G	A	X	E
S	R	L	O	I	N	A	T	I	O	N	U	O	G	I	G	D	X	R
T	W	Y	N	L	X	E	H	V	F	L	L	P	G	O	O	E	J	T
A	Z	S	E	A	O	C	S	V	W	U	S	G	O	D	T	O	H	Y
T	I	M	T	G	N	N	J	K	T	A	R	D	F	F	X	J	A	M
E	H	Q	G	M	W	E	I	I	R	G	W	Y	T	O	O	B	H	O
S	C	I	O	J	P	D	O	E	N	O	H	K	F	U	A	M	R	D
J	O	S	R	B	Q	N	U	V	S	B	W	X	U	R	L	N	B	E
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STATES
THIRTEEN
UNITED

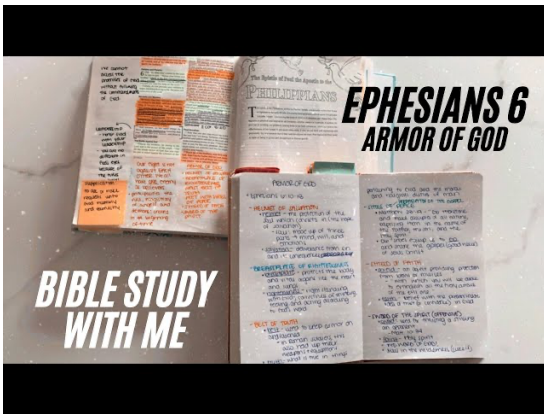


July Fourth

Word Scramble

6

Ephesians 6



6:1-9

1-4: Children are called to obey their parents and to honor them. Parents are to **bring them up** in the Lord. That is, it is the parent's job to teach their kids about Jesus and his Word. **5:** Paul is not condoning the system of slavery here (and we must remember slavery and servanthood was much different than slavery in American history). However, slaves were an important part of the family, which is why Paul

includes them in this passage. **5-8:** For us today, we should read this passage with employers, our government, and others in mind. This is how Christians should live and conduct themselves toward those in authority over them. **9:** In this time period, many masters held the power of life or death over their slaves. Masters, as well as those today with authority over others in different capacities, should treat those under them with dignity and respect. For before God, **there is no partiality** between any of us. He views us all the same.

Question: It is not primarily your church's job to teach your kids the Bible and the Gospel, it is yours. Your church should simply supplement and help you in that process. What are things you can do to bring your children up in the Lord?

Question: In your workplaces, places you volunteer, or in various things you may be involved in, what does it look like for you to practically serve those over you well? How does doing this demonstrate you are a servant of Christ (v. 6)?

Question: If you have people "under" you (children, employees, volunteers, etc.) what does it look like to lead well?

6:10-23

10-12: Believers are to be **strong in the Lord**, for **we do not wrestle against flesh and blood**. That is, spiritual warfare is real, and the Devil is a real enemy. **13-18:** Paul uses the analogy of armor to encourage believers to withstand the temptations and evils of this world.

Question: Many Christians seem to forget that Satan is not presented as an imaginary figure in the Bible, but a *real* one. Therefore, spiritual warfare does exist. Often this is experienced when you try to honor God with your life or pursue God honoring things. Has there been a time where you think you encountered this?

Question: Why do you think Paul uses warfare as a description for the Christian life?

Question: The first three chapters of Ephesians speak to the greatness of God and of Christ. The last three focus more on what the Christian life should look like in response to all Christ has done. Has there been anything in this book that has stood out to you or affected you the most?



The Bulletin Board



Prayer Meeting , Sunday Evenings at 5:00 PM.
 Harmony Home, July 14th @ 2:00 PM
 Celebration Committee Meeting, July 25th @ 6:30 PM



5:00 PM



Lord's Supper

July 11th



Ladies Bible Study Begins
Each Monday @ 6:00 30 PM

NOTE: See Pastor Doug to have any future events placed into the monthly newsletter.

First Southern Baptist Church

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