

So. moy. July 2, 72 P.M. WKRT

THE FREEDOM OF AMERICA

I Peter 2:16

Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil,
but live as servants of God.

Once again we come to celebrate the Declaration of Independence. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. That among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. "

These words come from one of the best known documents of modern time -- The Declaration of Independence, adopted by The Continental Congress of the 13 united colonies under the date of July 4th, 1776. One of the most important political statements of all time - the Declaration of Independence. And it ends with these significant words. "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

In one way or another, when the 4th of July comes around, we celebrate our independence here in America and we enjoy these certain rights - life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. At least many people make it a Holiday for themselves. We have a good time taking it easy. Or others tear around the country in a manner that will be recorded in the next day's newspaper - that there will be some that survive the tragedies on the highways. It is really a bad habit we have of using our Holidays in this way.

There in Philadelphia, many years back, when The Declaration of Independence was brought into being - The United States of America uttered a spirit of dependence on the will and the providence of God.

There is a crack in the liberty bell - it doesn't ring anymore. Maybe you have seen it in one of those historic buildings in Philadelphia. It is a silent reminder of a great day in the history of our nation. It is a silent symbol of a great cause -- the cause of freedom.

There is a crack in the liberty bell and it doesn't ring anymore. There are those in the world, and there are many of them who are longing and working toward the mending of the matter of liberty in our country. I should like tonight to discuss with you under two or three heads something about the freedom which we find in our text.

- ✓ First, where freedom is not found.
- ✓ Second, freedom, the American way.
- ✓ Third, where freedom can be found.

✓ I. FREEDOM, NOT FOUND.

I think today there is a great misunderstanding and the question often asked, what's wrong with America. It has been asked by politicians, by scientists, by soldiers, by industrialists, and some of these have tried to answer the question as to what is wrong with America. And maybe these people have a right to speak what they think is the problem. But we do not expect them to speak about God and our nation's responsibility to God. This is exactly our trouble. This is exactly what is wrong with America today. No room for God, no time for God, and

no concern about God, no admission or responsibility to God....God is unimportant, God has nothing to say. God doesn't enter into America's problem. Let the preachers rant and rave - that does not matter. No body listens. We have to settle things on other levels. Such as science and politics.

We may be critics as to the duty - the Christian duty which we have to God and to our country. But these seem to go hand in hand.

The critics of Jesus thought they would trap him and they put their question to him. And Jesus let it be known immediately that citizenship is related to two worlds. In fact, he said, the more loyal a man is to God - the better citizen he is. And when God is dethroned for Caesar then Caesar's throne will not last long. In Mark 12:17, Jesus said (render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's) and to God the things that are God's.

Christian patriotism has ever led the way to the highest civil hopes of humanity. In our own country this is a shining example.

But I fear that we have many who are hunting for freedom in the wrong place. And let me mention two or three places that freedom is not found.

First, it is not found in the illustrious past of the nation. The guarantee of freedom is not found in our past hopes. Nor in the pride which we have of our country. Pride goeth before destruction. And a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18.

God warned the Edom and that applies to nations today. Obadiah 1:3-4. The pride of thine heart, hath deceived thee. Thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring

Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.

Second, our freedom does not lie in our politicians. Woe unto us when our statesmen and our leaders become mere politicians. Now a statesmen will put the good of the country first. But the politician will sacrifice his country's goods for the temporal advancement for his party.

This is very evident today as the big political conventions are in process. You listen to some of the committee reports. A great deal of emphasis is placed on the party and not on the freedom of this country.

We have great cause for gratitude for patriots who served the state and the nation. We have really cause for regrets that we do not have more of these people. It would be well for Christian people to pray that God would give us such men to fill the offices in our land and who cannot be bribed.

Third, our freedom does not lie in our great wealth and in our great culture. Witness what happened to Egypt, Babylon, Greece, Rome. All of the great glories of the past. And history tells a tragic story of what wealth and decay in their greatness - we only have a memory.

America's freedom is not bound up in wealth or the material things. In her banks, skyscrapers, real estate, commerce, and oil - and cattle -- the material wealth is easily swept away. But it is in her freedom of conscience. By these

perish.

The Roman Empire in AD 301 - when Diocletian was emperor - they began a program of state regulation. Which brought an end to Roman civilization and was the beginning of the dark ages. They set up prices and wages that was controlled by the state. Violation of government orders meant that the person was put to death. Personal freedoms was limited. And of course during the dark ages, there were no great poets, historians, or painters produced. Famines were frequent. And people were searching for food. Human beings were no better than beasts.

Ramsey McDonald, who for many years was head of the British Empire said, I learned one thing -- that you can't make the poor rich by making the rich poor.

Whenever men defy the state and look to the state for regulation of life, from the cradle to the grave - they are always disappointed. When men surrender their liberties to the state in search of security - they really give up security.

A man must be free to work out his own destiny, his own way, controlled by laws to prevent him from interfering in the freedom of others. But lying communist propoganda, top-heavy government expenses, and socialistic schemes, and high taxation are all trends toward destroying our freedom.

II. FREEDOM, THE AMERICAN WAY.

I think we can say definitely tonight as we look at our country, that in the past we have had freedom of opportunity in a unique way.

First, there has been freedom in opportunity regardless of race or color.

In this time when people are deeply concerned about this problem of race discrimination, and injustices, the case of Walter Edwards - a successful business man of Oklahoma City is worth considering. When he was 14 he helped his father on a small farm. He hardly was able to read or write and yet he dreamed of having a business and helping needy people. In 1921 he went to the city and got a job in a junk yard for \$9.00 a week. He always managed to save a few cents a week for bigger things. Two years later he bought a horse and wagon and went into the junk business himself. Out of every dollar, he still saved for the future. Sometime later he bought the Miner Baggage and Transfer Company. Then he bought the Economy Carpet Cleaners. And The Enterprise Iron Foundry.

In 1931, Walter married a young woman. And she knew something about book-keeping. She helped him to straighten his accounts out and he went into the construction business. Some time years later he built the Edwards Edition in Oklahoma City - a housing (development of over 500 homes). For negroes in moderate circumstances. The Edward's were very happy. Mrs. Edwards became sick and went to Mayo Clinic for treatment. While there, she began to think about poor people who could not afford hospital care. Soon she and her husband planned a hospital. Today, the Edward's Memorial Hospital which began with well over 100 beds is serving everyone - regardless of race, creed, or color. The dreams of a farm boy came true. It was a familiar story in America. The interesting thing about it is - that Francis and Walter Edwards are negroes - living in a country in which many would have us believe - negroes are not supposed to have a chance.

That's the American way of solving the race problem- - for this is not an isolated case. There are many instances of others achieving success and distinguishing themselves in this country. God knows we have a long way to go and politicians have made many mistakes. But if we continue this freedom of

this nation.

Second, we have freedom of opportunity regardless of age, in our country. Many people today say, young people don't have a chance in America anymore. Or others would say that it is just the other way around. That there are no new frontiers to challenge you in the American system.

This philosophy is dangerous - more so than the Communists.

Just a few years back, the U. S. Jr. Chamber of Commerce made a selection of 10 outstanding people. They picked out the Governor of Arkansas, McMath. Sidney S. McMath, who was governor at 36 years of age.

Dr. Charles H. Hufnagle, 32, instructor in surgery at Harvard Medical School. Who had developed a new surgical technique.

Richard N. Harris, 33, of St. Paul who started a new business with an original investment of \$1,000. And in four years time, his business was worth 20 million dollars.

Mike Gorman, 34, a newspaper reporter was selected for exposing the conditions in mental institutions which resulted in a model mental health act.

Frank Zeidler, 36, mayor of Milwaukee, made advancements in municipal government.

Nancy Rowe, 16, who worked in her father's grocery store but made a thinner than air micro needle for injecting chemicals into living cells. Something that may contribute to the cure for cancer.

Doris Pines, 18, who composed music and played it - and received the praise of Stokowski.

Andres Kende, 15, developed a way to reduce and remove explosion hazards in chemical synthesis.

Now no one in America is too old, washed up, or exhausted, or too young. We really do not face blind alleys. Let no one say that free enterprise has run its course. Men can still dream more dreams, and venture, and hope, and plan, and work.

Third, opportunity regardless of condition in life. The idea that America's laboring man is poor, down trodden, with no hope is untrue. The story of SouChan - formerly of Canton Province in China is remarkable. Chan came to the country in 1927. A young man - complete stranger. 1935 he went to New York - took a job as a truck driver. He drove the truck for 3 years. Often sleeping in the truck to save his money. But hard work and rigid economy - he saved enough money in 3 years to make a down-payment on a small restaurant. As his character and credit became sufficiently established, he was able to borrow and expand. The House of Chan as it is called now, is worth over or nearly a million dollars. He was an immigrant truck driver and was finally living in a house on Riverdale Drive, worth over \$50,000. Driving a Cadillac and taking his winters in Florida.

But now you talk today to college graduates and they say that no body has a chance in America without a pull. Many believe that the little man never gets anywhere. The trouble with too many of our graduates is, they want to begin at the top. Think of Chief Fred Vinson, Chief Justice. Thomas E. Dewey, Earl Warren.

Senator Wayne Morris. They all began as newspaper boys and worked their way to the top inspite of distractions and belittlers - America still is a land of opportunity.

Fourth, Opportunity (regardless of handicaps and difficulties.) This is another freedom in the American way. You do not have to have things handed to you on a silver platter.

Take the case of (Bonni Facio Yturbide), who graduated not too long ago from the University of Nevada. He had all A's in all courses, in all four years. The highest record in the history of the school. He won the herz gold metal, the University's highest scholastic honor. He was popular in school. A star at the debating team. A good ches player. In his high school days in Reno - he had likewise made straight A's. He was president of his senior class. He won one of the 117 university scholarships, on a national basis competing with 14,000 students. Bonni Facio's case is interesting - because he is the son of an immigrant. And he had a severe illness at the age of three, which left him totally blind.

Now here is a fine example of the American spirit attacking a tough situation.

But when prices go down from all antiques - we head for the storm cellar and we say a depression is on. When employment is off from all time highs, we begin to want the government to make jobs. In times of harder times, we need more faith. Business in America suffers from a fear phobia. We all cry for security. But what we really need is freedom. The sollution to our problems is not in terms of bigger government, or big labor, or big business. I think the Declaration of

Independence had the fundamental idea.

Long ago William Penn said unless we are governed by God, we will be governed by tyrants. And Independence Day is a good time for us Christians to examine our freedoms.

✓ III. WHERE FREEDOM IS FOUND.

Where is America's freedom? Where are the elements of America's strength. Where are the stars that would guide her. And where are the things that would make us free.

Our text says, live as free men - yet without using your freedom as a pre-text for evil. But live as servants of God. I read about a man who was arrested by a New Jersey State Trooper. The arresting officer was surprised to find a child in the back seat. Even if you don't care about your own life, the officer said, you might think about the boy. The driver, in the heat of anger said, he is my kid. If I want to kill him, that's my business.

Now we might add that phrase which we so often hear - it's a free country. I can do as I please. That man was declaring his independence. He was telling the world on no uncertain terms, I am a free man.

Now Peter says you live as free men yet without using your freedom as a pre-text for evil. But use it as a servant of God.

Now a true servant of God would not have been in endangering his own life as well as the lives of others. He would not have declared his independence in

that way.

This is a wonderful text for Independence Day. Here is wisdom on high for us.

Back in the days when life was moving at a much more peaceful pace, it was customary for people to gather in parks, on city squares, on the 4th of July, to listen to the Band Concert. It was a big and noisy day and somehow every body was bursting with pride. Pride in the privilege of being an American.

Flags were everywhere. The red, white, and blue.

Somehow you felt it deep down inside of you - the joy of belonging. Belonging to a young and vigorous nation which had a glorious freedom.

But some of the moderns today tell us that this is just plain old-fashioned patriotism. And a lot of it is just nonsense. But let's hope to Heaven that we haven't lost it all. It has never been more precious - this freedom we know as citizens of America--it has never been more important, more evident when we compare our way of life with the manner of man's existence where freedom was never known or where freedom had been forfeited to dictatorship.

Somebody has said that one of the most wonderful things that could happen to every American youth on his or her 21st Birthday was to go on a complete tour of this fabulous country of which they have become grown up citizens. And let them go through this country and see what is here and then send them on a comparison trip - to see the poverty, disease, desolation, and general misfortune among people in most of the rest of the world. The knowledge and realization

gained from such an experience would perhaps make even the most calloused better people and better citizens.

We are still free - in a free country after World Wars have passed. While hundreds of millions of our fellowmen have disappeared, Iron Curtains, Bamboo Curtains, Sugar Cane Curtains and a new Slavery has set in in this new age. We are free men in a free country. Blessed if we can only grasp it.

Year after year, the press presents to us the glamour of the statistics, of our golden age. The incomes today of \$10, \$15, \$25, \$40 thousand dollars a year are becoming common place. Millions of Americans own their own homes and others are owning second homes. Luxury motels, weekend resorts, family-type country clubs, numerous shopping centers -- all of this is being displayed in the crowded streets. And cars are multiplying. Privately owned swimming pools, throughout the country are growing at the rate of perhaps 100-200,000 a year. The number of boats multiplying into the millions. For water skiers.

But that really isn't what makes America great and wonderful. It is our freedom. Freedom from bondage - freedom to govern ourselves, freedom to use our own talents. Freedom to live in a trade or profession of our own choosing. Freedom to speak - even to criticize the government. Freedom to live where we live, to make mistakes and to profit from those mistakes. To spend your money, to exchange for goods and talents, and for services. We are free to provide for the needs of the soul and well as the needs of the body. We are free to hear the voice of God calling. We are free to attend church, or to stay away from church. Now these are freedoms that are denied hundreds of millions of people but they are ours.

This is a wonderful treasure in our country and what are we doing with it. It is a glorious liberty. We are all ready to admit that today - that it is a great liberty and a great freedom. But what are we doing with it. The fact is that we are abusing our freedom, instead of preserving it.

Peter said in our text, don't use your freedom as a pre-text for evil. Like the man driving on the New Jersey Turnpike. We are living in a country in which individual is free to worship God according to the dictates of his heart.
"Do not use your liberty as a veil for evil living"

I think Paul saw this coming as he wrote about the last days. There would come times of stress - when men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, abusive, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, slanders, haters of good, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it. 2 Tim.3

This is a graphic description of what has been going on in America the last five or ten years. And the average American is spending several hours with the radio or T. V. And several hours with the newspaper. But his devotional books are getting just a minute with God. He won't even read them.

And the average American is thoroughly disgusted today when a sermon goes beyond 20 minutes. The sermon is purely Scripture. And he defends himself by saying that he is much too busy - and he is too busy doing what.

Now Peter lived many years ago and he said this 2,000 years ago. He lived as free men. Yet without using your freedom as a pre-text of Evil.

Live as servants of God. On the liberty of a Christian, the Scripture says,

if the son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. If you continue in my word and you are truly my disciple, you will know the truth and the truth will make you free. This is God's Word of reconciliation and redemption. The redeemed are free to walk with God, in the hope of eternal life.

It would be a different country, this wonderful America of ours, if every American would live as a servant of God. We, who know, what it means to be free. Only believing disciples of Christ and servants of God, are free. We owe it to those others. Through a continuing ministry to share this.

And here we are tonight, nearly 200 years later, able to say with the Apostle Paul, I was born a citizen, I was born with the heritage of freedom. Now this is liberty. For which others fought and died and I have never known anything else. We are free because somebody paid the price - we are a free nation. Because some were willing to die to set us free. We are a free nation because some were willing to give their lives at Lexington, at Gettysburg, and at Heart-Break Ridge, etc.

You may agree or disagree at the politics or the military tactics. One administration or another. But this you must agree that the heart of the American system, the philosophy of the American system, the dream that is executed in many different ways is still always freedom.

Of course the freedom that was bought for us is more than any kind of worldly citizenship. It is the freedom that comes to one as he becomes a citizen in the Kingdom of God. This is more than the precious freedom of liberty in a free world, of a free man. It is freedom of the human spirit. Set free from

the bondage of sin. The Christian knows that he can confess his sins and receive forgiveness. ~~The~~ Christian knows that in Christ there is a blessed renewal again. Day after day.

Yes, freedom is found in America - in this way.

I think it must be found in moral purity. We must cease to commercialize vices, immorality as fine art. And we must cease spending millions on drink. The record of murder and the billions of dollars that go into sin. No nation can sell it's morals for gold and escape the consequences of Belshazzar. America - which is lawless and drunken, must come to her knees. I think God is calling. And it is repentent America that God will pour out his blessing upon. Unrepentent America he will judge.

I think our freedom (will lie in political sanity.) Our glorious freedom of the past was preserved not by political tricks but by law enforcement. Men who were ready and willing to build the nation.

I think finally that we will find our freedom in religious integrity. Not in religious indifference - we cannot go on ignoring God and let worldliness sap the strength of spiritual Christianity. But we must line up our lives as in Dover, England. There are three harbor lights to guide ships that come in at night. And if they line up - the pilot sees these three lights and lands safely. In our nation we can line up moral purity, political sanity, and religious integrity - we will guide the ship of state to the safe harbor. May Independence Day call us back to the altars of our fathers. And let us live as free men - yet without using our freedom as a pre-text of evil - but live as servants of God.



the Lighter Side

"And what, dear," asked the mother of the child to whom she was teaching the alphabet, "comes after O?"
"Yeah!"

MEMORIZING THE DATE

"All you ever think about," complained the forlorn lady to her husband, "is your golf game. I'll bet you don't even remember the date we were married!"

"Of course I do!" retorted the indignant spouse. "It was the day I sank that thirty-foot putt!"

ON THE JOB

The foreman was astonished to see one of his laborers on a construction job pulling his wheelbarrow instead of pushing it.

"What's the idea," he demanded, "of pulling your wheelbarrow?"

"Can't stand the sight of it!" came the reply.

THE PRUDENT PATIENT

"The patient was fumbling in his pocket.
"You don't have to pay me in advance," commented the dentist with a smile.

"I don't intend to," rejoined the patient. "I'm only counting my money before you give me the gas."

LINGUAL DISTORTION

"So you have climbed the Matterhorn!" said the Frenchman to the Englishman. "That is a foot to be proud of."