

A LIBERTY THAT LASTS

Love in Christ alone brings a liberty that lasts.

Cov Pres

EPHESIANS 6:21-24

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Introduction:

A/ As believers we long and pray for freedom in Christ for all who will hear God's call.

B/ As Presbyterians we rejoice particularly in the gospel liberty which flowed well from the freedom of religion granted Americans by our founding leaders and citizens.

Horace Walpole, of the British House of Commons, told the Parliament during the colonial uprising: *There is no good crying about the matter. Cousin America has run off with a **Presbyterian parson**, and that is the end of it.* That parson was John Witherspoon, first president of Princeton, the only clergyman to sign the Declaration and the man who challenged Washington, Jefferson and others as they struggled to make the weighty decision for independence.

While some denominations waffled on conflict with England, a leading Pennsylvania Loyalist said in 1774, that "the Crown's chief opponents were *Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Smugglers.*" A Synod meeting had led the middle colony Presbyterians unitedly to support the Continental Congress in every way possible, including preaching. They recruited soldiers; they went themselves.

Historian Thomas Smyth, writes: *When Cornwallis was driven back to ultimate retreat and surrender at Yorktown all of the colonels of the Colonial Army but one were Presbyterian elders. More than one half of all the soldiers and officers of the American Army during the Revolution were Presbyterians.*

At the time of the Revolutionary War: ca. 3,000,000 in the colonies. *Of this number, says Egbert Watson Smith, 900,000 were of Scotch or Scotch-Irish origin, 600,000 were Puritan English, while over 400,000 were of Dutch, German Reformed, and Huguenot descent.* For example, from 1771-73 over 30,000 Presbyterians arrived from Ireland alone.

A loyalist wrote to friends in England: *I fix all the blame of these extraordinary proceedings upon the Presbyterians. They have been the chief and principal instruments in all these flaming measures. They always do and ever will act against government from that restless and turbulent antimonarchical spirit which has always distinguished them everywhere.*

Renowned American historian, George Bancroft wrote: *He who will not respect the memory of John Calvin knows nothing of American liberty.... Calvinism was revolutionary; it taught as a divine revelation **the natural equality of man.***

German historian, Leopold von Ranke, gave the reason for this happy marriage between religion and human freedom: *John Calvin was the virtual founder of America.*

Above drawn mostly from *Our Presbyterian Heritage*, by Paul R. Carlson

As we face difficult days, with religious freedom increasingly threatened, we must work smarter & harder, keeping a long term perspective, remembering our battle is not with mere flesh and blood.

Robert E. Lee, wrote, shortly before his death "My experience of men has neither disposed me to think worse of them; nor indisposed me to serve them; nor in spite of failures, which I lament, or errors, which I now see and acknowledge, or of the present state of affairs, do I despair of the future. The march of Providence is so slow, and our desires so impatient, the work of progress is so immense, and our means of aiding it so feeble, the life of humanity is so long, and that of the individual so brief, that we often see only the ebb of the advancing wave, and are thus discouraged. It is history that teaches us to hope."

Remember Wilberforce's long struggle against the slave trade & the bondage all men & women share.

ONE: Paul consoles us: bondage does not bind gospel love and liberty!

Ephesians 6:21-22 ²¹ But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. ²² I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

Tychicus: Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 2 Tim 4:12; Tit 3:12: *beloved brother, faithful minister, fellow bond-servant*

faithfulness—so much needed at every level in the work of God's church

Tychicus (*from a word meaning fortune/fortunate*): not fortunate—chosen, called, loved, faithfully served

A messenger of consoling love sent from the bonds of communion in Christ to proclaim God's faithfulness

TWO: Faith in Christ our liberator spreads peace love and grace

Ephesians 6:23-24 ²³ Peace be to the brethren, and **love** with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all those who **love** our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible **love**. *[emphasis added]*

A/ Peace: Eph 6:12-22/Phil 1:12-14

¹² Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, ¹³ so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, ¹⁴ and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

Eph 1:2 *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*

Eph 2:14-15 *For he himself is our peace, who has made both into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall...that in Himself He might make the two into one new man establishing peace.*

Eph 2:17 *He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.*

Eph 4:3 *being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Eph 6:15 *and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*

B/ Love with faith: Ephesian elders: Acts 20:17-38

Eph 1:15-16 *For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, I do not cease giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.*

Eph 3:17 *so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love*

Eph 5:2 *and walk in love, just as Christ also love you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.*

C/ Grace to those who love with incorruptible/immortal love

Eph 1:6 *to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved*

Eph 2:7 *so that in the age to come he might show the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*