

# Freedom and Love

The desire for freedom has been the driving force behind most (if not all) of the revolutions of the last few centuries, and indeed much earlier. Rome had already experienced in antiquity (73-71 BC) the revolt of Spartacus' gladiators, joined by a large number of slaves. Various unsuccessful minor revolts of peasants or serfs took place in the Middle Ages, but a separate chapter was the revolutions that gradually transformed feudal Europe into new state formations. The French Revolution gave birth to the Republic. The motto of the French Revolution was "Liberté, égalité, fraternité", in English "Liberty, equality, fraternity". This and similar revolutions were not just spontaneous uprisings of oppressed and exploited groups in society. In the background of these revolutions there was already an intention, hitherto hidden, to weaken or rather to eliminate feudal and ecclesiastical power. On this ideological basis the germs of democracy were formed, which eventually took hold in most of Europe and in the colonies of the Christian powers. Democracy stands and falls with civil liberties and rights, which tend to be enshrined in the basic charters of rights and freedoms and constitutions of states with a democratic polity.

The dark legacy of these revolutions is that they were violent. Their leaders were often cruel. Today, this can be seen in the fruit of democratic regimes, which is manifested in the growing lawlessness and the increasing arrogance and cynicism of power. Not that this did not exist before, but both were hidden until the power of the feudal lords was finally removed after the First World War and until the two competing power blocs of the West and the East were pitted against each other. The collapse of the Eastern bloc opened the way for the plans of the sons of the Evil One to be realised. Their plans obviously do not include freedom for all or love for humanity. People used to civil liberties and the rule of law are confused by the fact that their rights and freedom are being curtailed under various pretexts. This gives rise to various manifestations of civil discontent, radicalising the attitudes of groups and individuals. The consequence is what Jesus described two thousand years ago: "*And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold.*" (Matthew 24:12). Even today, Jesus' different words to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees of that time are true for some authorities: "*Even so you also outwardly appear*

*righteous unto men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” (Matthew 23,28)*

Yes, civil rights and liberty and agape love (the noblest form of love) are falling prey to the growing lawlessness and hypocrisy not only of spiritual and political leaders but in other sections of society. This situation is worsening year by year. Therefore, at the turn of the year, it is good to reflect on how to maintain in the future the freedom and love that we have been brought up by God the Father and Jesus.

### **What kind of freedom are we thinking about?**

Most people see freedom in the freedom of movement, in the ability to express their opinions freely, in the ability to protest against bad government or its holders. The ability to do business freely, to own a gun legally, etc. Freedom of religion should also be mentioned. What all these freedoms have in common is that they relate to people's social, material or cultural and spiritual needs. It is against their restriction that people protest most. People see these freedoms as the basis for the realisation of their plans, needs and desires. They are also the most attacked. Generally speaking, this is the result of the rule of man over man (Ecclesiastes 8:9). In the beginning man had everything free from God, including access to the tree of life, and he had only one single prohibition. He was forbidden to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The violation of this prohibition that the serpent presented to the woman as a great limitation on man by God the Creator led to far greater limitations on man's freedom by man throughout human history. Freedom from God was experienced by the Israelites during the period of the Judges. This entire period is summed up in the last sentence of the book:

*“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” Judges 21,28;*

God's government through judges gave the Israelites more freedom than today's democratic governments. What freedom does our heavenly Father offer today?

## The Glorious Freedom of God's Children

*“For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who has subjected the same in hope, Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”* Romans 8,19-21;

Christian history is full of persecution for the faith. Early Christians were often not only imprisoned but killed. What, then, is the freedom of the sons of God? In the fact that they chose their own path. They chose willingly to take the hard and thorny road, a road on which they have known persecution, imprisonment, and death, but a road more sure of the hope that it leads to eternal life, than to lead a short life in bondage to sin whose wages are death. The Apostle Paul often writes from prison in his letters. It would seem, then, that God's freedom brings only misery. Yes, it brings much suffering, because we live in a world that is hostile to God and His servants.

*“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever.”* 1John's 2,15-17;

## The freedom of God's children cannot do without love

*“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.”* John 13,35;

The freedom won by revolutions is based on the principles of power determined by the powerful of this world and on human wisdom. Love agape, it seems, can do without. The freedom of God's children cannot do without this love. Human freedom does not free man from the bondage of sin whose wages is death (Romans 6:20-23). The freedom of God's children frees them from the bondage of sin and death. Serving God and Jesus Christ brings more freedom than freedom in this world. No one can take it away from you if you are grounded in faith and hold fast to the unfading hope redeemed by the blood of our Lord Jesus.

The Word of God testifies that the freedoms guaranteed by human justice, as expressed in constitutions and charters of fundamental human rights and

freedoms, will continue to be curtailed by the power that engulfs the democratic order. Civil liberties cannot be relied upon because we do not have them in our power (though many still think they can defend them). God's freedom cannot be taken from us because it is not dependent on secular power. If we accept God's offer of salvation and freely choose to follow the path that leads to life, we will not waste our strength fighting for worldly interests but will lovingly proclaim the gospel of hope in Jesus Christ to anyone who asks. Let us not be anxious for worldly desires and lusts, for they will pass away. We will be spared the fear of the future, for the words of the Apostle Peter are true:

*“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, restore, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” 1Peter’s 5,6-11;*

*„And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness.“  
1John's 5,19;*

I pray to God in the name of his Son for us, his people, that he may lead us to the freedom of the children of God in his love. I ask for the strength of faith and hope that we may be able to withstand all trials and, with God's grace, continue on the path of life with love for others, confirmed by our good works. In this freedom may we walk in peace and joy.

*Amen*