

## SLAVES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

(Romans 6:12-23)

Intro: We are about a week away from celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.  
-235<sup>th</sup> anniversary.  
#Signing of the Declaration of Independence.  
-We Americans love to glory in our freedom.

How different from St. Paul's take on things!

-He calls us:  
#Obedient slaves.  
\*Romans 6:16.  
#Slaves of righteousness.  
\*Romans 6:18.

### I. Who Of Us Doesn't Know That Our Freedom Comes With Limits?

#### A. We Are Not Free To Do As We Please.

1. Last week Cindy Pennie told us about traveling in Tanzania.
  - a. When the A-OK Synod Medical Mission Team travels.
    - From Dar es Salaam.
    - To Morogoro.
  - b. They have a driver.
    - Roads.
    - Traffic.
    - #Something else.
  - c. I've never been to Tanzania.
    - I haven't experienced that.
2. I have been to India.
  - a. When I traveled around the Golden Triangle.
    - Delhi to Agra.
    - Agra to Jaipur.
    - Jaipur to Delhi.
  - b. I had a driver.
    - Traffic is something else.
  - c. Golden Triangle has the equivalent of an interstate highway.
    - Divided highway.
    - Two lanes in each direction.

- d. But on those two lanes of highway.
    - There might be five lanes of traffic.
      - #One is each traffic lane.
      - #One on the dotted line in the middle of the road.
      - #One on each shoulder.
    - The traffic is likely to include:
      - #Cars.
      - #Trucks.
      - #Buses.
      - #Motorcycles.
      - #Horse-drawn carts.
      - #Camel-drawn carts.
      - #Pedestrians.
    - Even with all of that traffic headed in one direction.
      - #Once in awhile.
      - \*There will be a vehicle headed in the opposite direction.
      - #It's crazy.
  - e. My driver told me that you need three things to drive in India.
    - Good horn.
    - Good brakes.
    - Good luck.
3. I have been to China.
- a. First morning in Beijing.
    - We were to go to the Summer Palace.
      - #Outside of town.
  - b. Drivers in China are worse than those in India.
    - There are traffic laws.
      - #But they are little more than recommendations
    - If all of the traffic lanes in one direction are clogged.
      - #Drivers use the lanes.
      - \*Meant for vehicles going in the opposite direction.
    - If those lanes are all clogged.
      - #Some drive across the grass.
  - c. On the way to the Summer Palace.
    - All of the lanes on our road.
      - #Were filled with outbound traffic.
      - #Even the lanes that were meant for inbound traffic.
    - Our road dead-ended near a bridge over:
      - #River.
      - #Drainage ditch.

- On the other side of the bridge.
  - #There was another road.
    - \*Continued to the Summer Palace.
  - #But that road was filled with incoming traffic.
    - \*Even in the lanes meant for outgoing vehicles.
- Bridge.
  - #Virtual gridlock.
    - \*Those of us who wanted to get to the Summer Palace.
      - +Had nowhere to go.
    - \*Those who wanted to get into downtown Beijing.
      - +Had nowhere to go.
  - #There were police there.
    - \*But they were the criminal police.
      - +Not the traffic police.
    - \*So they just sat around on the park benches.
      - +Watching.
  - #There was a man in our tour group.
    - \*From California.
    - \*Who made balloon figures.
      - +Poodles.
      - +Mickey Mouse.
      - +All kinds of balloon figures.
    - \*He was a walking good-will ambassador
      - +With his balloons.
    - \*He and our tour guide.
      - +Got off the bus.
      - +Went up to the bridge.
    - \*Our tour guide became a traffic cop.
      - +“If you move this vehicle over here,”
      - =“We’ll give you a balloon.”
      - +“If you move that vehicle over there,”
      - =“We’ll give you a balloon.”
    - \*They:
      - +Unclogged that bridge.
      - +Broke up that traffic jam.
      - =Or I might still be sitting there.

4. Freedom.
  - a. Ignores the rules.
  - b. Does as it pleases.
    - Not really freedom at all.

- B. But Paul Claims That We Are Not Under The Law (Romans 6:14).
  - 1. Not free from:
    - a. Civil law.
    - b. Traffic laws.
  - 2. But free from God's law.
    - a. Doesn't that sound like:
      - Recipe for absolute disaster?
      - Where the people of Israel were at the end of the Book of Judges?
        - # "In those days there was no king in Israel;"
        - # "All the people did what was right in their own eyes."
        - \*Judges 21:25.
    - b. Talk about chaos!
      - That's far worse than any Beijing traffic jam.
      - For that kind of a mess, we would need a lot more than:
        - # Good horn.
        - # Good brakes.
        - # Good luck.
  - 3. Yet Paul says:
    - a. We are not under law.
    - b. But under grace.
      - Grace means gift.
      - Our freedom.
        - # Not something:
          - \*We fight for.
          - \*We die for.
        - # But something:
          - \*Christ died for.
          - \*Christ gives to us.
      - Freedom that makes us slaves.

## II. God's Freedom Makes Us Slaves.

- A. For Paul We Are All Slaves.
  - 1. Slaves.
    - a. Sin or righteousness.
    - b. Self or God.
    - c. Disobedience or obedience.
  - 2. We don't have to look too far to find examples of our slavery.
    - a. To:
      - Sin.
      - Self.
      - Disobedience.

- b. We don't have to look to other men behaving badly.
    - Anthony Weiner.
    - Arnold Swarzenegger.
    - Dominique Strauss-Kahn
    - John Edwards.
    - Elliott Spitzer
    - Mark Sanford.
    - Bill Clinton.
  - c. We have only to look to ourselves.
    - Our selfishness.
    - Our greed.
    - Our addictions.
    - Our wanting to do as we please.
- B. To Be Slaves Of Righteousness Means We Are Free To Do What Is Pleasing To God.
1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer.
    - a. German pastor.
    - b. Lutheran theologian.
      - “Freedom is not something we have for self but for others.”
  2. In baptism.
    - a. We die/we are drowned.
      - Sin.
      - Self.
      - Disobedience.
    - b. So that we can be raised.
      - Righteousness.
      - Others.
      - Obedience.
  3. Jesus gives us a couple of examples of what that might look like.
    - a. In our Gospel lesson.
      - Matthew 10:40-42.
    - b. Welcoming.
      - Reminds me of our Mission Statement.
      - #Responding to God's love,
      - \*We faithfully:
        - +Welcome.
        - +Worship.
        - +Grow.
        - +Witness.
        - +Serve.

- c. Giving a cup of cold water.
  - Little thing.
    - #But how important when it is so hot outside.
  - After Ruth Rasbold's funeral service on Thursday.
    - #At Fellowship.
      - #I went to Pastor Fox's office.
        - \*To take off my vestments.
      - #I put those in my car.
      - #As we were waiting to go to the cemetery.
        - \*I went back inside the church.
          - +To get out of the heat.
        - \*Folks from the funeral home.
          - +Handing out bottles of cold water.
        - \*I grabbed:
          - +One for me.
          - +One for Pastor Fox.
        - \*Such a little thing.
          - +But it sure hit the spot.
            - =On the way to the cemetery.
            - =On the way home again.
    - As we Rekindle the Fire.
      - #Have our goal-setting session on July 17.
        - \*Identifying how we can use our gifts.
          - +To accomplish God's mission.
      - #Maybe our goals will not necessarily be big things.
        - \*Require a lot of:
          - +Time.
          - +Effort.
          - +Energy.
      - #Maybe they will be the little things.
        - \*That show how we are slaves of:
          - +Righteousness.
          - +Service to others.
          - +Obedience.

Concl: Theme of this summer's ELCA Churchwide Assembly.  
 -Freed in Christ to Serve.

May it be so for all of us.  
 -In Christ we have been freed to be slaves of righteousness.