



Unity Church of Christianity
Where to Find Freedom
July 3, 2011

Howard Caesar

Quite naturally, I'm speaking about freedom today. Freedom is something—yeah—it's important. You bet. Certainly freedom is something that the world holds dear throughout our world. One cannot underestimate the importance and the value of our freedoms. Sometimes you never realize how important your freedom is until you don't have it. You never know how wonderful it is until you've experienced a portion of your life—or perhaps many who have experienced a lot of their life who are not free from other lands and so desperately wanted to experience that. They know inside their souls that there is a freedom that they want to come to and experience. So we can be very grateful that we live in a land that is free and that it upholds that. People died to be able to achieve this freedom—this land—and to sustain it as well. And all of that, as wonderful as it is, and as grateful as I am and you are, it's still my observation that most everyone is still looking to find freedom. In other words, documents will, to some extent, create an outer freedom—through the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. These are things that are so vital and important, yet it cannot create the experience of an inner freedom. People can look to find freedom external to themselves. They can try to find it in things, in accomplishments, in gathering and accumulating wealth or various ways of finding security or what have you. There's nothing wrong with those outer things, but at the same time, we can

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never, ever assume that you're going to find freedom there. It just doesn't happen. Many of the things that we seek in life are to have, so even our documents—the Declaration of Independence—we have free speech and we have the right to bear arms and we have the right to own our own property and to have free worship. These things are very important and very valued. And yet, again, they do not give us the freedom that comes internally at the level of the mind and the heart at one's being nature. So documents and things can never bring us inner freedom, and I think we know that because it's never an outside-in process; it's always an inside-out. You have to always begin internally if you're going to experience the true, absolute feeling of what freedom is. It's a state of being. It's not necessarily having. It's a state of beingness.

I look at myself, and I ask if I am really free. And if I'm honest with myself, I have to say, "No, I'm not." I still have things to be free of. I have judgments, I have fears, I have stresses, I have guilt and I have anger. I have various forms of negativity, too, that I am cleansing myself of and am in the process of unlearning the various mental habits or patterns that have occurred in my life. We're all in that journey. It's all a process of healing and awakening to the fullness of truth of who we are. So I'm not unlike anyone else. If I ask myself, "What is it that freedom feels like? What does it feel like? What does the experience of freedom feel like?" I have to really come up with—for myself, at least—and you may see it differently—but I feel that in the mix of the experience of feeling free is the energies of peace—there is a peacefulness that accompanies it—and there is love.

Love and peace, for me, are synonymous with freedom. If I am freed up in a loving state, I'm really in a free place. If I'm really feeling total peacefulness, where stress is gone and harmony prevails, I am experiencing a sense of freedom. So these are all peace and love. These are qualities of God. These are spiritual in nature. These are attributes of the divine. And if you were just to pause and reflect on those times when you have felt the most at ease, the most harmony, the most free of all stress, worry, and anxiety, it would probably have been times when you were not really in your head but you were really in your heart. You had a deep heart-connected energy that took you to the energies of peace and harmony and love. These are the energies of God.

So spiritually speaking, freedom is something that is actually very sacred and it is very holy and it lives within you. It can never necessarily be found outside yourself. One of my favorite verses—and I probably brought this to your attention in the past somewhere along the line, because it's one of my favorite verses. I don't know when. It is taken from 2 Corinthians 3. It states, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." Just listen to that. "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." That is so basic, and that is so simple and yet so profoundly true, if you can know that.

Can any of us imagine our God as having a spirit that is stressed, that is anxiety ridden, that is angry? Any of that? No, that's not at all the image that we hold or the likeness that we're trying to attain. God is love and peace and joy. We know that. So where the spirit of love and peace and

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joy is, there is freedom. There is freedom where you find love, peace, and joy and that's within yourself, of course.

After stating that first line from 2 Corinthians, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom," that verse goes on. It goes on to say, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness, from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." Who is the Spirit, this comes from the Lord. Okay, so to begin with, what is the unveiled face? Well, the unveiled face is really to unveil that part of us that is separate. It's our humanness, perhaps. It's our ego self. To peel that away and find the truth of who we really are, and as we peel that away, we are being changed. We are being transformed from glory to glory, if you will. And again, I love the part which is saying that, "For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." In other words, the whole idea is that if you connect with this spirit, then you will come to know this glory or this freedom—this dynamic.

Reason out with me, if you will. We all agree that God is spirit, and we all have come to know that we are made in the image and after the likeness of God therefore you and I are spirit and therefore we have this spirit within us. Therefore, if we have the spirit within us, we have the spirit of freedom. Therefore, anywhere we go, whoever we are at any moment in time, we have this freedom that can be felt. But there is something that is veiled over or covering over it, so that's the dynamic. But if we can actually know that we are in the process of removing this—that freedom actually does live within us if we are willing to take the steps to unveil what stands in the way. *Course in Miracles* is something that many of you have read to some extent and studied and are familiar with. One of the things that the *Course of Miracles* says is that you cannot sell your soul, but you can sell your awareness of your soul. In other words, you can never sell out on the truth of who you are. At the core, you are who you are. God knows it, and any soul who is awakened knows it. But you can sell your awareness of it. You can sell out on your awareness of it, and that's what much of humanity has done. So the trek back is really an awakened awareness of the truth of who we are. The more we become aware of the spirit within us, which is holy, then the more we listen to the voice of God. We develop a deepened relationship of oneness, and we feel the inner promptings of spirit that is tugging at our heart, leading and guiding us toward being that which we're held to be in the mind of God, and that's a process. But it can't happen without us initiating a desire—an absolute conscious awakened awareness of a desire to invite in and invoke in this spirit—this presence and power—to know that it's there, to access it. Many of us have lost that awareness in varying degrees, and a lot of our spiritual journey is to make what has become weak strong again, and that is that awareness of the spirit of the Lord, if you will. Because where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, and we will be all the more free in our lives. So that's a waking-up process.

The Holy Spirit is our true teacher. Jesus told us that. When he left, he said, "I'm going, but I will leave with you what will be coming is this counselor, this spirit, that will help you remember the truth and the things that I have told you that are universal and lasting and eternal in nature."

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So that's the Holy Spirit, and that's what is there for us. And it's so important that we access it. When we tend to go it alone in life, we live from a separation consciousness—separation awareness—and we have what might be described as learning handicaps. In fact, *Course of Miracles*, which is an inspired work, if you let it stand on what it says to you—if it sounds like truth—it needs to be, because it is an inspired work that is said to be the clarifications, even, of Jesus—on what it was that he taught. One of the passages from the *Course* states this: “You have learning handicaps in a very literal sense. Did you know that? There are areas in your learning skills that are so impaired that you can progress only under constant, clear-cut direction, provided by a teacher who can transcend your limited resources. He, the Holy Spirit, becomes your resource. Because of yourself, you cannot learn. You, by yourself, cannot learn alone. The learning situation in which you have placed yourself is impossible, and in this situation you clearly require a special teacher and a special curriculum.”

It's saying that that is the Holy Spirit. The next line, I love. It says, “Resign now as your own teacher.” We haven't done so well. It goes on to say: “Your learning potential, properly understood is limitless, because it will lead you to God. You can teach the way to him and learn it if you follow the teacher who knows the way to him and understands his curriculum for learning it.” Again, that's the Holy Spirit. “You need offer only undivided attention. Everything else will be given you.” Pretty easy, it sounds. “The Holy Spirit is your strength because he knows nothing but the spirit as you. It will always know nothing but the spirit as you.”

You don't know that as you on a regular basis unless you build a relationship that opens to this spirit of holiness that is in you. “He is perfectly aware that you do not know yourself and perfectly aware of how to teach you to remember what you are. Because he loves you, he cannot let you forget your worth.” And how many people here have a low sense of worth? “We're sacred. We're holy. We carry the spirit of God in us, and this Holy Spirit will not let you forget your worth. It will continue to hold you to be nothing but and as spirit.” Very powerful stuff. One last statement from the *Course* that is meaningful to me. “The Power of decision is your one remaining freedom. The Power of decision is your one remaining freedom.” As a prisoner of this world, you can decide to see it right. So all of us are in this world, and we can see it in any number of ways. But if we access the Holy Spirit, we'll begin to see it with some clarity and some understanding, and therefore our projects on the world and our way of seeing and judging it will not keep us from being what we are already held to be—our true worth, our true value, our core essence, the spirit of God—from emerging or expressing.

There is a story of the formation of our country and the Declaration of Independence formed by our early forefathers. It's actually a story about the spirit of freedom coming forth in and from the core of some of these individuals. It is rooted in spirituality, not in religion. It is rooted in spirituality, which is about all. That's what made this land so great, was that. There are a number of men that came together on this, as you know, but there were in particular three that were really tuned in, awake, aware, and aligned with this spirit. Call it the Holy Spirit or call it the Divinity

or whatever. These three men were Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. They were really deeply connected to the spirit of God in what they were doing, and they knew it. They were conscious of it. Thomas Jefferson was the one who first brought forth the name United States—United States. No one had heard that name until he came back and delivered the first reading of the Declaration to those who had gathered and were evaluating it—a group of men. They were in extensive discussion for weeks as to whether or not there should be an actual independent country created and whether or not they should take this bold stand and make this statement of independence. The men there argued and debated and had discussions and dialog for weeks about it because there was a lot of fear about this whole thing. Those who represented those 13 colonies were going to have to take a stand at great cost, and they knew that. They were ordinary people to some extent, but they were also representing ordinary people who had important things. They had family and they had wealth and they had various other things in their lives. And there were those in that room who felt that perhaps the tyranny of the British might not be that bad—that maybe they could tolerate it a little bit more. Maybe they could settle for making things do with how horrible it was and the inadequacies. But it was really the strength and the boldness and the inner decisiveness—that decision—that freedom to decide—that clarity that was brought together by Franklin, Adams and Jefferson that carried this energy of freedom that spoke from the core and essence. It wasn't just about an outer freedom. It was something that spoke from the spirit within them that had engaged and that caught the fire of the room. When it was finally decided that there would be a document to be written and a vote would be taken once it was brought before them, they had to decide who it was that was going to be the writers of the document. So they narrowed it down to two men. It was John Adams or Thomas Jefferson. So the group basically—half the group was for Thomas Jefferson and half for John Adams. They went back and forth for a while and finally said, look, you two guys decide, and they left the room. You decide who is going to do it. And then in the journaling that is either from John Adams or Thomas Jefferson—in the journaling later, you can find historically where they report the conversation that went on between the two of them as to who would write it. So basically what happened was John Adams says to Jefferson, “You write it.” Jefferson said to John Adams, “No, you write it.” Adams said, “No, you write it.” Jefferson said, “No, you write it.” It went back and forth for a while, and finally John Adams says, “Why should I write it?” Or actually it was Jefferson that said, “Why should I write it? I'm younger. I don't have the experience, and I don't have the background.” And John Adams says, That's exactly why you should write it—for that very reason. I'm older. I have more enemies.” He said, “If you write it, fewer enemies are going to take it apart, tear it apart, and dissect it. It has a better chance with you writing it.” So Jefferson accepted this assignment. Notes have been found and scribbling and scrawling as he put this together and ideas flowed forth. When he came back and shared it with the group, it was an unusual and outrageous document because it was so spiritually based. It was not religious; it was spiritual. It's important for you to realize it, because no person had to be Christian, and you didn't have to be a particular religion. It was so progressive, and it was so all inclusive. It was really the spirit that was speaking about the idea of oneness. There was a strong fundamental faith in the presence of a supreme being that was there in their consciousness—a

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supreme being in whom all lived, moved and had their being. This was a God that there were God-given rights for all, not just for a few, and nothing could separate or segregate the people. So with some arguing that ensued, the original document was debated again. One of the big debating points was that it included our brothers and sisters who were slaves. Later, it was taken out, and they were excluded. And Thomas Jefferson was among those who was a proponent for fighting for the rights of our African-American brothers and sisters, but it was eliminated because they felt that essentially it would bring them to a civil war, and they hadn't even formed a country yet. So they needed to first form the country, but they knew—those who were spiritually based knew—that that issue would come down the road. Because what they had written was that all are created equal, and a few years later it did get dealt with, of course, with the war on that.

But toward the last part of the Declaration of Independence, there's a beautiful and significant statement that Jefferson wrote. It goes like this, "And for support of this declaration and with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence." That was very important to have this protection of divine providence, because they knew that they would likely be going to war—that their families and their friends and their land and their wealth were at stake. They didn't even have an army yet. They were taking on the British—the Mother England—the most powerful nation in the world at that point in time. Can you imagine what that feeling must have been in that room with what they were doing and what they were standing up to—how ominous? And it was so important to them that that statement be in there. "With reliance on a protection of divine providence, we pledge mutually to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." That out of the unitedness—the unity—of a pact—of making a decision that they felt had providence—the divine behind them—that it would see them forward. So they got total agreement, and it was very important that no one colony back out—that they really be united—because the British would then align with that one colony and it would become fragmented and it would fall apart. Unity was ultimately important. So amidst all this debate and discussion, again, the clarity and the purity of it all came from these three individuals. The document was signed and the rest was history. Everyone suffered great loss, as they had anticipated. Many of them died. Many of their children died in that first war. It was great sacrifice. But when we look into the lives of Jefferson and Franklin and Adams, it's, again, very evident their spirituality was there. It framed the foundation of our country, which we celebrate again in independence—that the spirit of God—Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And the spirit of the Lord was in that room, and it was spoken from the heart and soul of at least those three individuals, and the rest caught that.

Ben Franklin has a favorite prayer. In his autobiography he said that he said this prayer every day of his life, and it began like this: "Oh, powerful goodness, bountiful father, merciful guide, increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interests." You know—he was inventor. So he says when you touch your truest interest, you touch your genius. Anyway, the prayer went on, "Increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolution to

perform that that wisdom dictates. Father of light and life, thou good supreme, teach me what is good. Teach me thyself. Save me from folly, vanity, vice, from every low pursuit. Fill my soul with knowledge, conscious peace, pure virtue, sacred, substantial, never-fading perseverance.” Get that sense of pushing on towards what is right at the heart and core, spirit would have you do and be, and that was in there. He said that every day. Jefferson and Adams became friends. They wrote letters to each other. Jefferson wrote to Adams back in 1822. He said that the doctrines of Jesus are simple and tend to all the happiness of men. He said, “There is only one God.” He knew that. There is only one God. He came from that place. We’re all one—one God. He has many names, but he knew there was one God. “That God is perfect,” he said. And he said, “God and man are one.” He knew that. He said, “That to love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself is the sum of religion.” Those were his words, and he wrote this to Adams. Adams responded—wrote back—he said, “In my experience, I have come to know that God has infinite wisdom, goodness and power.” Infinite wisdom, goodness and power—notice he didn’t say “I believe that—” He said, “My experience has been that God is—” He had a personal experience. He was living it. He went on to say, “God created the universe. His duration is eternal. His presence is expansive and extensive as space. Now, my friend Jefferson, suppose an eternal, self-existent being, existing from eternity, possessed of infinite wisdom, goodness and power and absolute total solitude. Conceive the benevolent project of creating a universe. Consider it, my friend.” I have nothing else to say at this moment. Consider it. Consider it. He did end it, actually, saying, “Consider it that God placed a part of himself in every one of us, created a universe out of himself. Consider that.” And I say to you, consider that.

Four simple words came out of this energy of this group—In God We Trust. In God we Trust. Freedom calls for all of us to be living In God We Trust. A major point that I want to make is this, and that is that verse. “Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” You can look at our country and how it was formed and this group of men, and basically where the spirit of the Lord is, it was with those individuals. They called on it. They looked for it. They invoked it. They invited it. They accessed it. They wanted to be guided by it. They knew that where that spirit was, it would lead them to freedom, because freedom was divine; it was of one’s own heritage as a spiritual being. And I say to all of us that wherever we may be in our unfoldment, if we’re looking for freedom—that that process is there in the process of inviting, invoking, developing a relationship with that spirit and connecting with it on a daily basis—on a regular basis—as they did. Because, again, it’s knowing that the spirit dwells within us all. And where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So any moment, wherever you find yourself, just remember that you have the true teacher within you—that all it asks is for your undivided attention, and in doing so, you have a Declaration of Independence declared from the great within. God bless you all.

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