"SPIRITUAL FREEDOM"

Introduction:

1. Song: "Born Free".
   a. This song touches the tempo of our times.
   b. From "Independence" to "Anarchy".

2. Actually - this is the spirit of the New Testament: Gal. 5:1,2; Jno. 8:32; Lk. 4:18,19.


Discussion: (So, what is freedom).

I. Freedom is always limited (vs. "license").
   I Cor. 10:23-24; Gal. 5:13.

   A. It is true with nature; even with God!

   B. It is true socially.

      1. Story: "City By-Laws".
      2. Trueblood, "A Place To Stand."

   C. It is true spiritually. I Cor. 6:12; Gal. 4:3. (Alcoholic is an alcoholic "free" even though he "does what he wants".)

II. We are free from something.
    (NOTE: "Salvation comes immediately but the 'freedom' of the abundant life is something else."

   A. Free from sin. Rom. 6:17.
   B. Free from law. Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:17-18.
   C. Free from meaninglessness. Jas. 4:1-4.
   D. Free from fears (time tables; self-image) Rom. 8:28; I Jno. 4:18.

III. We are free to something.

   A. Free from sin to serve the "Law of Christ". Rom. 8:1-4; Jno. 14:15. (Jno. 14:15, a consequence not a threat).
   B. Free to become a servant - Rom. 6:17.
NOTE: The theology of today says, "Love God and you will love your neighbor. Love God and your neighbor, and then do what you will." (AMEN)

But what the "new moralist" has forgotten to notice is, if you genuinely love your neighbor, you will do what God says is best for him!

C. Free to "fit" in your universe.

1. You will want to do His will, because you love Him.
2. You will be doing what you are "designed" to do. Rom. 6:17.
3. This will align you with the cosmic plan, Eph. 5:17. (Race horse pulling load of manure is not fulfilling his destiny--nor is a person who lives away from the will of God.)
4. You will have power to do it, II Cor. 3:17.

IV. Freedom requires discipline!

A. This is true physically.

1. Jim Ryan is "free" to run a mile under 4:00 because of years of discipline.
2. Rubenstein is free to make beautiful music after eight hours a day for 35 years.

B. It was true in Jesus' life.

1. He was poised and "free" to play the music of life (like Rubenstein could play Mozart).
2. Because of the rigors of His discipline (of course, in addition to the spirit).
   a. He was in the wilderness, prayed, was frustrated.
   b. "He must have seen the hurt of the world for 30 years through the windows of a carpenter shop."
3. He was free at the outlets, because he was disciplined at the inlets.

C. It must be true for us also:

1. We need the devotional disciplines.
   a. To expose ourselves to God's power sources. Jno. 8:32; Rom. 10:17.
b. To develop tastes for spiritual things (Sing-Sing and Mystics).

c. Remember the "apple tree". Col. 3:1-8; Psa. 1.

2. But we also need to discipline ourselves to obedience.

a. Faith and obedience produce each other (Bonhoeffer, "Cost of Discipleship", p. 69). See Psa. 119:45.

b. Want a spiritual adventure? Tackle the most difficult thing that Jesus has asked you to do--head on!

c. Rom. 6:1 is not for "cop-outs".

YES: But, the question still remains, "How are we free if we are disciplined by someone else's limitations???

V. Freedom is "knowing Him".

A. His authority is the winsomeness of His life.

1. The "shepherd" vs. "the cowboy". Matt. 28:18. (The shepherd leads; the cowboy drives. Jesus is a shepherd.)

2. He excites love and loyalty.

3. I dare you to digest the personality central in the four Gospels, and then be indifferent to Him.

B. The Spirit reinforces the impulse that Jesus' beauty stimulates, Eph. 3:17.

C. The Key: "Freedom, i.e., doing what you want."

1. If you know Him (through disciplines of exposure), you will love Him.

2. If you love Him, you will want to do things His way. Jno. 14:18.

3. If you want to do what you ought to do--Brother, you are free!!! Jno. 8:30.

Conclusion:

1. The prodigal said: "Make me a servant," and found "freedom back in the father's house.

2. David said, "I had rather be a servant in the house of the Lord, than to dwell in the tents of the mighty." Jno. 8:36.