

- Let those who have ears, hear the Good News!
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SCRIPTURE:

2 Corinthians 3:17 (NIV) – Larger reading: 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

STORY:

When asked what was his father's definition of faith, the son of Dr. Howard Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, said: "Common sense in active co-operation with God."

OBSERVATION:

In 2010 I was out driving and listening to Moody Radio. One of my favorite preachers, The Rev. Tony Evans, was on the air. He was preaching on the conflict found in the book of Genesis and the creation story. His statement, which caused me to pull over and write it down, was this: "The lesser who is dependent on God is greater than the greater who lives independent from God." I kind of liked that!

Tony was right on ... the conflict was over who was going to be in charge ... God or Satan. Adam and Eve had a major decision to make ... to be independent from God or to be dependent on God. Isn't that the ongoing conflict of human nature?

If our daughters didn't teach me the lesson of "testing their limits," our three grandchildren sure do. It's just a normal reality. It is something that we all have done repeatedly in our lives ... haven't we? We push at the boundaries ... test the limits ... question authority ... chaff under the bridle that would place restraints upon our independence. There seems to be something built into our DNA that forces outward in the effort to grow up. Adam and Eve were not any different.

This testing of the limits is the story of our lives. We tested the limits with our parents, then our college professors, then those placed in authority over us in our jobs and, sorry to say, but even with our spouse. Always pushing, desiring, wishing, hoping for a different outcome – but always testing that outward limits of just how far can I go without getting into too much trouble ... seeking always to live an independent life from anybody and any real responsibility.

The Lay Leader in my last church gave me a license plate for the front of my car. It reads: "How much can I get away with and still get into heaven?"

Do you remember the thought process ... cannot wait until I reach 16 then life will begin; cannot wait until I am able to drive; cannot wait until I am out of the home and on my own; cannot wait until I am married; cannot wait until I'm free of the daily grid of sitting in boring classes and writing term papers; cannot wait until the kids are grown and gone; cannot wait until I am retired; cannot wait ... cannot wait ... testing the limits ... desiring to be free ... independent from ... only to hear, in the background, the slight laughter of God as he shakes his head saying, "Oh, you foolish person. If you

only really knew what you are asking after all look where it got Adam and Eve. I had to throw them out of the Garden, making them live on their own, defend for themselves, make their own way in this world. If they had only listened ... my plan was a whole lot better and much easier than the independent way they picked. The foolishness of men and women.”

True freedom and liberty comes only as we surrender to Jesus Christ. It is only then do we discover the abundant life that God intended at the point of creation.

It is our choice and Christ does making it inviting ... we, the lesser, being dependent on God and empowered by the Holy Spirit, can really be greater than the greater, i.e. Satan and those who would do it the Devil's way, trying so desperately and failing to living independent from God ... but there really isn't really any comparison between the two choices ... is there? It is so much easier to do it God's way ... all to Jesus I surrender all to him I freely give!

QUOTE:

Man, despite his artistic pretensions, his sophistication and many accomplishments, owes the fact of his existence to a six- inch layer of topsoil and the fact that it rains. - Source Unknown

PRAYER:

Our souls yearn to be free. We long for the liberty of our spirit. We constantly seek the breaking of the chains that would hold us back. Please understand our stupidity in that failed thinking. Come into our hearts and set us truly free. In the name of life himself, Jesus Christ. Amen

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim

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