

Proper 9-C - 7/4/10 – *Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 10:1-11, 16-20 – A New Found Freedom

It started with a debt-free living class at Osborne Baptist Church in Eden. The class led Stoneville couple Amy and Clay Griffin to give up beach trips, new toys for their children, and meals at Long Horn Steak House in order to eliminate \$130,000 in mortgage and credit card debt over a 3 year period. Once “free from” this debt that weighed heavily on their minds, they found themselves free to invest in something else. They began to mull over how they might use their additional discretionary income. At first they thought about remodeling their kitchen or buying a new car. But their faith led them to invest in something far more life changing. They chose to share their financial blessings by adopting children from Moldova, one of the poorest countries in Eastern Europe. Recently, they signed paperwork to adopt a 4-month old girl and her 22 month-old brother. They also helped make improvements to the home of a local widow. “There was a new found freedom that comes with being debt-free,” Clay said. “But we figured out that we couldn’t just put the money away. We had to do something constructive with it.” “It’s a big step of faith to say we’re going to do this,” Amy commented. “We don’t have the funds but we believe God will provide everything we need.” (News and Record, June 28, 2010)

In Galatians Paul writes, “So Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law. You have been called to live in freedom – not freedom to satisfy your ‘self-centered and self-indulgent’ nature, but freedom to serve one another in love.” Being in relationship with Christ reconfigures our focus, and gives us a vision of how God wants us to live together. In Christ we see the true intent of God’s Law. The Law was not meant to tie us in knots, be a staircase to heaven, or even a measuring rod for righteousness. Rather, it was meant to be a guide for our feet. Our relationship with Christ is not so much about right beliefs as it is right living. God has given us the freedom to decide how we’ll live and whom we’ll serve. Life is about choices: who we love and how we demonstrate our love for God. Like the Griffins, the choice is ours about how we’ll spend our lives and in what we’ll invest.

In a similar way, the founders of our country wanted to be free from what weighed heavily on them, namely, the oppressive taxes and laws of England. They wanted to be free from the tyranny of other nations, the rules and constraints of social limits. Once free from that, their new found freedom led them to invent a new way to live, govern and worship. We are the beneficiaries of their struggle and vision. We enjoy a freedom far greater than they could have ever imagined. John Adams said: “You will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make good use of it.”

You and I will never know how much it has cost our God to preserve our freedom. “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). This is a God who is invested in us, adopts us as his children, nourishes at his table of grace, provides what we need, and then sends us into the world to be his agents of grace. We are free from trying to please and placate God so that we might be free to honor, worship and show our love for God as we give ourselves away in love. This is our new found freedom: to be free from fear, insecurity, and uncertainty, so that we might be free to invest our lives in God’s kingdom of grace, mercy and justice.