

FAITH & FREEDOM

LESSON 8: FREEDOM PRINCIPLES

Introduction

We live in tumultuous and rapidly changing times. We might with King David ask the question, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3) I submit there are a number of things the righteous can do. We need a Biblical understanding of the events we are witnessing and the evolution of prevalent ideologies. We need to not be distracted from God's mission for us during these last days. We need to stand on the front lines and not sit on the sidelines in silence.

Sinai

God ordained government to maintain an environment where righteousness can flourish. At one extreme are those that will tolerate no authority and no rules that limit their behavior. At the other extreme is totalitarianism where there is only control and tyranny. In the middle is Mt. Sinai, where God blueprints a revolution against the abuse of power and might no longer makes right. The freedom principles from the great exodus from tyranny in Egypt are needed more than ever.

I. **Principle 1:** Freedom must be won.

- What are the big conflicts in Exodus?
 - between Moses and Pharaoh?
 - between God and the Egyptian 'gods'? (Ex. 5:2, 7:5)
 - between freedom and tyranny?
- The Jews' freedom included freedom to do what? Rules or no rules?

NOTE: Liberation and freedom are not the same. (Ex. 13:17-18)

2. **Principle 2:** Freedom must be ordered and cultivated.

- What is the relationship between trust and freedom? Contrast a high trust / trustworthy society and one built on suspicion?
- Does a humanistic society build on trust or suspicion?
- How would the covenantal system of Exodus foster the concepts of loyalty and trust? (Deut. 28) Can we analogize to other covenant areas?

NOTE: A covenantal society is one "founded by a common binding agreement between the people in order to found what is essentially a republic or commonwealth—supremely the Jews, the Swiss, and the Americans." (Os Guinness)

- Freedom is not a matter so much of the form of government but (1) the responsibilities of the people to the society and (2) the limits on power provided to the government.
- The Bible says all human / governmental power is delegated and limited. (Romans 13)
- How is the Exodus covenant unique? (Ex. 19:8, 24:3, 7)
- How were kings different in Israel than other nations?

3. **Principle 3:** Freedom must be celebrated and handed on.

- How did Israel do this?
 - The covenant responsibilities are taught (Deut. 6:1-9)
 - Feasts are kept (by all). (e.g., Lev. 23)
 - History is taught. Why does it matter?
- Education matters because freedom needs to be intergenerational and people forget.

4. **Principle 4:** Freedom must address wrongs in the right way.

- Retaliation vs forgiveness
- Sinai points to accountability / justice tempered by mercy

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. – In Congress, July 4, 1776

“Exodus is history’s supreme precedent and pattern for revolutionary change and therefore for hope and the very notion of possibility. After the exodus, as Rabbi Sacks notes, the world has never been the same. The contagion of freedom has been released...But Exodus not only models freedom, it has also launched a successful and sustained critique of the abuse of power that continues to this day. Contrary to the dictators of history and the apostles of postmodernism, power is no longer self-evident and self-justifying. Might no longer means right.” — Os Guinness, *The Magna Carta of Humanity*

“A covenant is therefore promise keeping and trust writ large and made lasting. It is the trust that underlies all healthy families and all good relationships now expanded to become the foundation of an entire society and even a nation. A covenant is a commitment that makes life worth living and enables life to be lived well. It is a word of honor given at a point in time that binds together past, present, and future, making possible lasting love, enduring freedom, flourishing lives, and a healthy community.” — Os Guinness, *The Magna Carta of Humanity*

KEY FAILINGS OF THE UNITED STATES IN PROTECTING FREEDOM:

- A liberalism that seeks unbounded freedom and the only moral principal is that you not impose boundaries.
- Humanity replaces God as the source of freedom and blessings.
- We did not impose proper civic education in schools. If we are a nation of ideals and intentions (not always perfect) then we have to hand off the baton not undermine those ideals.
- Neglect of history and book reading, generationalism, thirst for change at all costs.

(adopted from Os Guinness, *The Magna Carta of Humanity*)