

The Liberation of Leo

As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor. --1 Peter 2:16-17

The lion, caged most of his adult life, had resorted to pacing the perimeter to endure his confinement. Thirty feet west, 12 feet north, 30 feet east, 12 feet south -- he walked that circuit hundreds of times a day, always in the same direction. One day he was moved to a game preserve where he would be free to roam and to hunt through hundreds of square miles of open space. After so many years, he could stretch, explore, run, and have close contact with others of his kind.

The team released him carefully from the transport crate. He bolted into the open and skidded to a stop. He then, with great dignity, began his new life: 30 feet west, 12 feet north, 30 feet east, 12 feet south. To the day he died, the lion never moved from the confines of this invisible cage in the midst of glorious liberty. He was free to everything but his own habit.

Many of us Christians are lions in prisons of our own making. Jesus Christ lived an example of freedom, taught freedom, liberated many from prisons of pain, sickness, law or limitation, and suffered and died to ensure our freedom. Yet we, ransomed and redeemed, sit in the dungeons of our fear and self-loathing, complaining about our imprisonment and walled off in relationships from others who could love us. The cell door is open, yet we refuse to step outside.

From our creation, God gave us the ability to choose. When Adam and Eve, whether historical or metaphorical, chose to know the parameters of good and of evil by eating the forbidden fruit, it was affirmed that God had given us free will. It is a gift, of course, but vital to our relationship with God. He did not create us puppets or organic robots. He wanted us to be REAL, and created us thus.

As people of the Spirit, there is nothing that can imprison us. When we are in union with God, no cell, no torture, no deprivation, no humiliation, no pain, no suffering can chain our souls.

He calls. The door is open. Let's step outside of the definitions of our own limitations and be free.

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