

FREEDOM WHY DOES GOD GIVE US THIS GIFT?

A story. Satan is worried. Not as many people coming his way anymore. So he gathers some of his minions and asks them for fresh ideas. One advisor suggested that they tell people that there is no heaven and so the best thing to do is try to maximize pleasure in this life. Satan was not impressed. We've been saying that for thousands of years. Next advisor suggested that they tell people that there is no hell and that no matter what you do or how you act you are going to go to heaven in the end anyway, all will magically be forgiven. Again, Satan isn't impressed. "Too many people reading the Scriptures and believing them.

The third advisor said, "Well we could always tell them that yes there is a heaven and yes there is a hell but...there's no hurry. You have plenty of time. No hurry to forgive that person who hurt you. No hurry in becoming pure. No hurry in doing something about that anger or that drinking too much. No hurry about being honest and truthful in all your relationships. There's no hurry to go to church every weekend. There's always next weekend. No hurry to set aside time to pray." Suddenly the enemy was interested. "What would you say to them if they were afraid they will run out of tomorrows?" "I just tell them not to think about that. There have always been enough tomorrows haven't there? And it's depressing to think about. Just try to think happy thoughts."

We have been given freedom. The angels have. We have. Freedom is given to us so that we can choose, of our own volition, to do that which is good, to do that which praises God, to do that which loves the neighbor, to do that which enables me to make the gift of myself to another, and of course to the Lord.

A dogwood tree cannot make the gift of itself; it can only do and be as it has been made. A dolphin cannot make the gift of itself; it can only do and be as it has been made. But you and I can make the gift of ourselves to another person, to God Himself. We can do this because God has made us this way. God wants us to be this way. God desires us to be this way. God has given us freedom. Our freedom is limited; it is limited to our time on earth. In the moment of death we are sealed into the person we have chosen to become by what we did and did not do with our freedom.

Freedom can be used correctly or it can be used selfishly. I can use my freedom to serve myself, to see to my own pleasures, to make my life easier even if at the expense of others. I can use my freedom only for me and mine not caring about anyone else. And in the process can feel I am entitled to use my freedom this way. I can want to use my freedom to secure my own happiness, peace and harmony. BUT. And this is a big but. If I do not use my freedom as God intended it to be used then instead of bringing happiness and peace and harmony, it will bring unhappiness, anger, strife, resentment. We will not want these things but they are the by-product of the misuse of freedom. Ultimately we will end in hell, in a hell of our own choosing.

Jesus uses his freedom as a blessing. Jesus brings with him a remedy for the negative effect of sin in our lives. As man he gives us his good example of kindness and compassion He does not right every wrong but he does conquer evil with his goodness freely poured out in all his loving actions. Do the good. Love the neighbor. Live knowingly and willingly according to God's way of seeing things. But always remember this. Hurry up. No matter how much time you think you have you have limited time and only a little time left.