

Pastor Dave Rohde

For Sunday, July 7th "Freedom?"

Romans 8:31-39 – *The Message*

¹²⁻¹⁴ I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet! Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it.

¹⁷⁻¹⁹ Stick with me, friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal. There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. I've warned you of them many times; sadly, I'm having to do it again. All they want is easy street. They hate Christ's Cross. But easy street is a dead-end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods; belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetites.

²⁰⁻²¹ But there's far more to life for us. We're citizens of high heaven! We're waiting the arrival of the Savior, the Master, Jesus Christ, who will transform our earthy bodies into glorious bodies like his own. He'll make us beautiful and whole with the same powerful skill by which he is putting everything as it should be, under and around him.

Exodus 15:22-27 – *NIV*

²² Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water. ²³ When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.) ²⁴ So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?"

²⁵ Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink.

There the Lord issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test. ²⁶ He said, "If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you."

²⁷ Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.

Takeaway: Freedom isn't found in the absence of trial or trouble, but in trusting God to provide in the midst of them.

Questions:

1. How did you celebrate July 4th? Do you have any traditions for the day?
2. What comes to mind when you think of the concept of "freedom"?
3. How does the response of the Israelites to the bitter waters reflect human nature in times of crisis? Do you have any examples of God providing for you when you encountered "bitter waters" along a journey?
4. What are some steps we can take to "keep our eyes on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward — to Jesus" (Philippians 3:12-16) while we walk through seasons of wilderness?

Sermon: <https://podcast.wpcwestlake.org/services/mp3/sermon20240707.mp3>

Service Video: <https://youtu.be/FM1HF34GcMc>