

Freedom in Christ is ultimate freedom. As the Lord says in Matthew 10:28, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both the soul and body in hell.” Now don’t get me wrong friends, I love this country and the freedoms that are ours because of her standards of freedom, however, to focus primarily on the freedom that the USA can grant us, is to ignore or minimize the freedom we receive through Christ.

Paul tells us that our citizenship is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20) and therefore our focus and loyalty should be to the King of Heaven, God who sits on the throne. Matthew 10:28 is written within the context of religious persecution. Before verse 28, we find Jesus revealing to the disciples the need to anticipate the same kind of treatment that He receives (V. 22-25). Then He tells the disciples not to worry about those who can take your physical life because of your following Christ, but fear God in verse 28. In other words, stand firm in the faith knowing that God’s judgement if you turn from Him during persecution will be much worse than any persecution you will experience at the hands of evil men.

Jesus reassures the disciples that their faith is secure with the example of a God’s loving care and plan for the sparrows. What we might say to be a worthless animal, God attends their funeral. Not a single sparrow falls from the sky apart from God’s will (v. 29-31).

I was told throughout my public school days, that the reason for America was the pursuit of religious freedom. The freedom to worship in the religious tradition of your choosing (Catholic, Anglican, Protestant, etc.). I was further educated in Bible College concerning the freedom to choose your tradition, rather than having a tradition decided by the government and forced on all. The more you learn about Mary Tudor, also known as, “Bloody Mary” you will soon realize that the persecution and national religions of England, played a big role in the felt need for freedom to choose a religious tradition of your own choice. Thus persecution produced a need for religious freedom, a freedom found when the colonies were settled. A freedom fought for when declaring independence from Great Britain. A freedom that is still being fought for to this day (though Brittan is no longer our opponent).

I guess I say all this to say, be thankful for your right to choose your church, your denomination, your religious tradition. Be thankful for the freedoms we experience, but don’t forget that our focus, our loyalty must be to Christ. Even in the midst of the persecution God will watch over us.