

Difficult Freedom Outline

^{NRS} Sol 2:8 The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills.⁹ My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice.¹⁰ My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;¹¹ for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.¹² The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.¹³ The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

^{NRS} Rom 7:15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good.¹⁷ But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand.²² For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self,²³ but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

1. Text quote and honesty in scripture- Paul's most honest moment here
2. But what's going on with Paul- what is it he's struggling with?
 - a. The speculation
 - b. This makes it easier for us to hear these words- not about us
 - c. Paul really talking to us- the way life is in freedom.
3. Difficult freedom
 - a. Americans and difficult freedom
 - b. Freedom as young person, young adult, and adult
4. Essence and existence
 - a. Paul and nous and sarx
 - b. Essence and existence
 - c. Difficulty with freedom is no one can step in and fix this- certainly not God
5. What we want and what we get
 - a. This is frustrating- like freedom when life is good, but we want God to step in when things are painful. To step in and fix things.
 - b. Paul like this too- who will save me?
 - c. But how does it end? Ends with him split. But different than beginning.
 - d. In beginning it's all up to him. Then, he remembers God is with him. This doesn't fix anything, but it changes everything, for God is free, too. Lost can become found, last become first, and dead made alive.

6. Why this is good

a. This may not be easy news, happy news- but it is good news. It is good news we are free. It is good news God comes to us not like a dictator, but like a lover, like in the song of songs- calling to us, giving us a sense of what's possible, and then leaving us be to follow or not.

7. Fred Small- lullaby

We have cleared off the table, the leftovers saved,
Washed the dishes and put them away
I have told you a story and tucked you in tight
At the end of your knockabout day
I will sing you a song no one sang to me
May it keep you good company.

You can be anybody you want to be,
You go wherever you will
You can travel any country where your heart leads
And know I will love you still
You can live by yourself, you can gather friends around,
You can choose one special one
And the only measure of your words and your deeds
Will be the love you leave behind when you're done.

You can be anybody you want to be,
You go wherever you will
You can travel any country where your heart leads
And know I will love you still
You can dream all the day never reaching the end
Of everything possible for you.

Amen.