

## Freedom is Not Free



Not far from where I live there is a beautiful park called Port Williams. It is situated on the Strait of Juan De Fuca. At the park there is a boat ramp, barbecue pit, tables, and a long strip of narrow beach squeezed in between the High Bank and the water. Across the water you can view the San Juan Islands. My family likes to go to Port Williams for walks. Last time we went we paused at a little marble monument by the picnic area. The monument was a memorial to a young man who died at Pearl Harbor on the USS California. His name, Marlyn Nelson and picture were engraved on the memorial. At the bottom of the memorial somebody had stenciled in large letters the words, 'Freedom is not free.' We paused for a moment and I wondered who had erected the monument.

We walked a ways up the beach and met a man. He was collecting pretty stones that sometimes wash up with the surf. He was older and we struck up a conversation. In the course of our talk he told me that he had served in the navy and had been at Pearl Harbor during the attack. I asked him if he knew anything about the monument and he told me that he was responsible for placing it there a few years back. He said he just wanted people never to forget the price that has been paid to keep the United States free.

We all can be thankful we live in a free land with many privileges. We can travel where we want, choose our work, pick where we live and many other freedoms which we sometimes take for granted. These freedoms have been won and preserved at the cost of the lives of many servicemen such as Marlyn Nelson.

Although we live in a free land with many privileges, the greatest freedom of all the freedom from the guilt and the power of sin can't come through any government. Instead, it comes only when a sinner bows the heart and acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. 'Whom therefore the Son shall set free shall be free indeed.' In order to set men free from the bondage of sin the Lord Jesus had to die on the cross. **Freedom is Not Free** were the words stenciled in on the bottom of the monument. These words are never truer than when spoken of the liberty that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

Nearly two thousand years ago he was nailed to the cross and hung up between heaven and earth. He was falsely accused and had a sham trial. The man who sentenced him to death said, 'I find no fault in this man.' *FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.*

A crowd gathers outside the judgment hall and shouts, 'Crucify him. Crucify him.' *FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.*

Back then criminals carried their own cross to the place of execution. ' And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.' *FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.*

Soldiers nailed his hands and feet to the cross. *FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.*

From 9am to 3pm he hung on the cross. Every breath he drew caused excruciating pain. *FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.*

The first three hours he spent on the cross were in daylight, and many people passing by scorned him. *FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.*

His last three hours on the cross were spent in a supernatural darkness. During this darkness, God's wrath fell on him who did no sin. 'He who knew no sin was made sin for us.' *FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.*

The last words he spoke on the cross were 'It is finished.' What was finished? His work in suffering was finished so that all who believe on him might have perfect peace and know their sins forgiven. ' For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.'

This is freedom indeed. This is freedom of the best sort. This is freedom that will last the longest. For when a few more weary years go by, and earthly life ends, the joys of heaven will just be beginning.

Freedom from the guilt and power of sin is not free. It cost God's Son terrible suffering on the cross. What is free now is the gift of eternal life. It is offered to all who will believe in God's Son. 'That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.' 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.' It is offered freely to all but only received by those who believe in Jesus Christ.

He died to set us free. Will you decide to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior so that you might find the freedom that comes only by knowing him?