

Wednesday July 1st

Up until now my twice-weekly reflections have been based upon the set reading for the day. This week I use some verses I referred to briefly in something I wrote for some of my Church members during this last week.

As I was reflecting upon the easing of Lockdown and the freedom which people were looking forward to my mind took me to these verses Paul wrote to the Galatians, recorded in Chapter 5. Paul was writing many years ago in a totally different context but for me some of the ideas ring true in the now. I have edited out a few verses from the passage but leave this part in for you to think about in terms of a totally different seeking of freedom.

Galatians 5 “Freedom in Christ.”

5 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. **Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**

⁶The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

⁷ **You were running a good race.** Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? ⁸ That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. ⁹ **“A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.”** ¹⁰ I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty.

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But **do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh rather, serve one another humbly in love.**

In all times and in all places we need to respect the freedom we have and not abuse it, to use it for the benefit of others and not just for our own ends.

Seeing vast crowds flocking to the beach at Bournemouth and the crowds gathering in Liverpool to celebrate the winning of the Premier League – (I know it has been 30 years but as a supporter of THFC I have been waiting somewhat longer for a league title. Indeed they have not won the league since the year I was born) made me wonder about how people think about themselves and their neighbours in a time of crisis.

One days celebration or time spent on a beach could take many more days back under “the yoke of Lockdown” for many others.

A risk assessment on such gatherings would be a very interesting exercise.

In recent weeks many church leadership groups have been looking at risk assessments and health and safety procedure regarding our buildings being open for Private Prayer and Public Worship, we are taking things seriously.

As we look to open our premises for prayer and worship our Government and Church Authorities are guiding us and they must guide us in the decision we take. I believe a slow and perhaps cautious approach, where we get things right, is better than a rush and the causing of health to be compromised as a result of eagerness to get back to how things were.

But away from the current crisis “it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery” that slavery to sin from which we have been set free.