

Faith Forum: Freedom through knowing who we really are

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July brings with it thoughts of celebrating our freedom and independence. This year, with unrest taking on many different forms around the world and trying to impress us like modern-day Goliaths, it's more important than ever to think about who we really are, how that affects our freedom, and what our independence means.

We don't need to rely on other people or government to grant us freedom. Jesus came to show us that we are free naturally, and not victims or products of heredity or society, the past, present, or future. He said, "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

That truth is that we are, right now, beloved children of God, created in His image, as related in Gen. 1. We are reassured of this fact, also, in Rom 8:16, 17, where we read: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." This gives us independence from earthbound circumstances or claims. And, oh how God cherishes us! We read in Isa 43:4 that we are precious in God's sight and, "thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (58:11).

Knowing God's great love for each of His children and Jesus' absolute understanding of this, Paul exhorted us to "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with

the yoke of bondage” (Gal 5:1).

God created each and every one of us to reflect and express Him. “This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise” (Isa 43:21). Mary Baker Eddy, the discoverer and founder of Christian Science, writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: “Man is the expression of God’s being (p. 470).

God’s being is infinity, freedom, harmony, and boundless bliss” (p. 481). The Bible contains many examples of people who could have thought of themselves as victims, but whose deep trust in God turned their situations into victory: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the burning fiery furnace with not a hair on their heads singed, nor even the smell of fire had passed on them (Dan 3); Daniel was safe in the lion’s den (Dan 6); Paul and Silas were in prison when the prison’s doors all opened and everyone’s bands were loosed (Acts 16); and Joseph, who, though sold into slavery by his brothers (Gen 37), was able to later save his family and countless others from famine. That’s just a few examples.

Let us, too, refuse to be victims of any kind, and rather lay claim to our birthright as beloved children of God – a God who loves all of us without measure. What a glorious heritage we all have!

- PAULA BROOCK is a member of the Christian Science Church, Brookings.

THE FAITH FORUM is a feature of the Curry Coastal Pilot and Del Norte Triplicate. Ministers, pastors and other leaders or members of local faith communities are invited to submit articles for this space. A length of 500 words or less is recommended. Send by email to: piloteditor@countrymedia.net or drop by either The Pilot or Triplicate offices.