
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIBERTY AND FREEDOM

Salt Lake Radison Hotel
Utah Eagle Forum Annual Convention

January 14, 2012
By Jim Noorlander

In sharing my thoughts with you, I do so with all the humility I can muster. **What I share with you today is the perspective of the founding fathers and the Christian principles this nation was founded upon.**

A lot of people will tell you that there is nothing in the Constitution that addresses the moral issues such as gay marriage, abortion, dishonesty, pornography, and crime. These proponents are wrong. There is a spirit about the Constitution that must be understood if we are to interpret the Constitution correctly. That spirit of which I speak is the Declaration of Independence--"the spirit of the Constitution," said John Quincy Adams.

The Declaration of Independence states that this nation would be guided by "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" or, simply said, the laws of nature and the laws of God as revealed through scripture, reason, and revelation.

Using the Holy Bible and the Declaration as our guide, let us ask some obvious questions. What has the Lord said about homosexuality? What has the Lord said about abortion? What has the Lord said about stealing or the redistribution of wealth through the taxing process known as socialism?

We also learn from the Declaration that the founders appealed to the Supreme Judge of the world for the "rectitude" of their intentions. Rectitude means righteousness. We do not have the freedom to do whatever we want but to follow God's plan of happiness as outlined in the Holy Scriptures.

And finally, the Declaration reminds us that we are endowed by our Creator "with certain unalienable Rights" among which are the right to "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." Each one of those rights is a topic in and of itself. But for this presentation I would like to focus on the word liberty and its application to the Constitution.

Patrick Henry said, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists but by Christians. Not on religion but the gospel of Jesus Christ."

If, then, this nation was founded upon the gospel of Jesus Christ and the laws of nature and the laws of nature's God, meaning the Holy Scriptures, where would we go to find a proper definition of the word liberty? Would it not be the Bible?

We read in 2 Corinthians 3:17, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty."

Liberty, therefore, is associated with the Lord's Spirit. We also learn from the scriptures that liberty is associated with God's law. In James 1:25 it reads, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." And, finally, in James 2:12 it states, "So **speak** ye...the law of liberty."

So, by definition, liberty is the Lord's Spirit, His word, and His law. A more secular definition of liberty is freedom with high moral restraint.

Now, why is the word liberty so important to our understanding of the Constitution of the United States? Because the word liberty is a "key" word found in the Preamble of the Constitution.

The Preamble of the Constitution states the purpose of the Constitution even among the most liberal mindsets. So let us review the Preamble and break it down for key words and phrases.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

So what was one of the purposes of the Constitution as stated in the Preamble? To secure the blessings of liberty--to secure the blessings of God's law, His word, and His Spirit.

Once again, let us ask some obvious questions. Where do our rights and blessings come from? Is it not our Creator? What examples or what has the Lord said about abortion, homosexuality, pornography, debt, socialism, securing our borders, and keeping the Sabbath day holy? The list could go on and on.

While we are at it, using the word "liberty" in relationship to the Preamble, how are we as a nation and a people going to establish justice and ensure domestic tranquility and have a more perfect union without the Lord's perfect law, Spirit, and His word?

Only in this light can the Constitution be understood correctly. That is why John Adams said, "Our Constitution is made only for a moral and religious people."

This is why same-sex marriage is not a states'-right issue anymore than rape is a states'-right issue--because it destroys liberty. We cannot create a right that our Creator has already ruled upon. Years ago we had laws against abortion, sodomy, and immoral practices. The reason was to prepare the minds of the children (Alma 39:16) and to remind every generation that these immoral practices are wrong.

Now, here is the principle: we never use our freedom to destroy liberty. We never use our freedom to destroy God's law, word or Spirit.

Ironically, understanding the moral issues and liberty also carries over into other areas such as public policy and foreign affairs. Do you remember years ago when our televisions had tubes, and when one tube went out it often times would affect the other tubes? As a result, the picture on the television was altered. Well, that is how it works most often than not in government. Generally speaking, when leadership has it wrong on the moral issues everything else also suffers.

Benjamin Franklin made this same point before a divided assembly June 28, 1787. He stated, "Except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain to build it." (end quote) He also, in the same speech, went on to say without the Lord "we leave to chance war and conquest."

So, when do we get involved in wars? When America shares the same values of liberty and freedom with those nations we protect or when it is in the best interest of our national security. The Constitution has provided a way to do this. Otherwise we lead by our example, not our involvement. If you give people freedom and they do not understand liberty, what do they do with that freedom? They harm one another. Just look at the Middle East.

The reason I share these things with you is to remind all of us that if we cannot get it right on the moral issues, how are we going to get it correct on the matters of war and conquest, or anything else, as Benjamin Franklin suggested?

Now, switching gears a little but still on the subject of the difference between liberty and freedom, I would like to emphasize another principle. There is nothing worse in trying to solve a problem if one does not understand the nature of the problem.

The low standards we see in America today--the out-of-control welfare state, abortion, same-sex marriage, pornography, the breakdown of the family, illegal immigration, the bail out of America--are only symptoms of a disease. The disease is socialism and its twin sister, communism. The more a nation embraces socialism the more **secular and godless the nation becomes**. Socialism manifests itself in many ways, but primarily when government removes personal responsibility and accountability from the lives of the citizens. As you know, for years the politicians have been promising the American people great things at their own expense. In exchange for those promises, the politicians receive honor, prestige, and security in their present positions. The end result of all these abuses

of government is the loss of both liberty and freedom and that, inevitably, is a disastrous course.

So, why is abortion, same-sex marriage, pornography, and socialism so wrong? Because they destroy liberty and, once again, we never use our freedom to destroy liberty.

Now I would like to switch gears and share another principle. For years I have spoken out against voting for the lesser of two evils or, put another way, the best-bad choice. I still feel that way. I have often quoted George Washington to explain my point, and I even ran as a third-party candidate in order to get my message out. As such we got enough votes to fill the Conference Center in Salt Lake City and were instrumental in exposing the weaknesses of the Republican Party in the state of Utah. I was "Tea Party" before Tea Party was cool.

So let's review, once again, what George Washington said at the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

If to please the people we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterwards defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair. The event is in the hand of God. (emphasis added)

Let me break this quote down to how I see it:

"If to please the people we offer to ourselves"--if we offer to our children and society gay clubs, gay teachers, gay lawmakers, pornography, and a multitude of socialistic programs, how can we afterwards "defend our work?" And where is afterwards? Is it not judgment day?

This quote also suggests to the mind that good, wise, and honest people do not vote for the best-bad choice. Good, wise, honest people vote for only those principles that are constitutional in the tradition of the founding fathers. Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair. And what is that standard? The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Holy Bible, the revealed word of God and reason. As Christians, as good people everywhere, let us do what is right for the right reasons and then leave the event in the hand of God.

Now the principle--there is the rule, and there is the exception to the rule. When the exception to the rule becomes the rule we have problems. When you have two fundamental principles you can compromise, but when you have truth versus error there is no compromise. One of the issues facing the founding fathers when establishing this great nation was slavery. They had to compromise in order to form a more perfect union. Think about that--wicked slavery, or the establishment of a more perfect union. Let us apply that principle to today's circumstances.

America is at a tipping point. Some studies have shown that more people are receiving than paying into the system. America has embraced socialism (slavery), and this is a reality that must be faced. Even many of the good conservative citizens, including leadership, of this nation have come to embrace and support socialism. After all, it has been stated "we need a little bit of socialism to operate government." This is the circumstance in which we find ourselves. I did not create the situation, I was born into it. What America lacks as a nation right now is "public virtue."

If the Constitution is to be taken seriously, the place to start is to understand and respect the original meaning of the founding fathers. All the candidates running for the presidency will have a difficult time implementing the original intent of the founding fathers because of the **circumstances** we now find ourselves in as individuals and as a nation. So what is to be done? Just as the founding fathers had to compromise to establish the Republic, we may have to compromise to save the Republic. The principle is this.

In some cases, accepting a compromise might be the wise course in order to preserve principles that might be fully achieved only with the passage of time. Which is to say that any compromise must be understood in light of the larger principle at issue.

Because of the circumstances in which we now find ourselves, saving what is left of the Republic, Americans of principle may have to tolerate what currently exists and have to vote for a candidate that they would not normally vote for because of the larger principle at issue. **Let not perfect become the enemy of good!**

In conclusion, let me close with these final thoughts.

America...is a choice land... It is a ...land or promise...preserved for a righteous people. The Lord has decreed that those who dwell thereon...should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off...

The God of America has kept his promise. There is much that is right and good in this nation, but there is cause for serious concern. America is forgetting the God of her birth, and that inevitably is a disastrous course!

I don't know what to do about it. I don't know how to fix all the ills of this nation. But my friends, I believe in the power of prayer. I know that God hears us. I believe as the apostle James that "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availed much." This people and this nation would be wonderfully transformed in a short time if only we - if only we individually would humble ourselves, acknowledge our failings, and turn back to the God of this land. Therefore, in that spirit, I would like to share this inspired prayer offered on the 29th of June, 1997, by President Gordon B. Hinckley. He said:

O God, our Eternal Father, Thou who presides over the nations and their people, we come unto Thee in prayer. We thank Thee for this great and sovereign nation of which we are citizens. Touch the minds of those of

our Congress that they shall stand tall and independent in defense of the liberty of the people. Bless the Chief Executive. He is our President. Let thy Spirit move upon him to bring to pass those measures which will lift the burdens of government from the backs of the people and keep this nation, under God, a citadel of freedom standing as an example to all the world. Bless the Supreme Court of the United States, which in recent days has declared unconstitutional a measure designed to secure the religious liberty of the people of this nation. May a way be found under Thy divine inspiration to bring to pass another measure that will be sustained by the Court. May Thy peace rest upon this nation. May we as a people look to Thee and live. May the benevolent hand of the Almighty protect us from the evil forces of the world. May humanism and secularism bend to an increased acknowledgment of Thee as our Father and our God. May the Spirit of brotherhood spread throughout the land. As we pray to Thee we do so in our manner, and respect the prayers of others who speak after their manner, that Thou wilt [wilt] hear us all as we lift our voices in behalf of our nation. Almighty Father, hear us, guide us, protect us. Make us both strong and benevolent before the world. Forgive our erring ways. May we turn back to Thee in our search for wisdom, for guidance, for direction, we humbly ask in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

My friends, America! America! May God shed His grace on thee.