

SOPHIA - 5 April 2020

FREEDOM

William Wallace, Scottish independence warrior/
freedom fighter/ mythical hero:

“We come here with no peaceful intent, but ready for
battle, determined to avenge our wrongs and set our
country free. Let your masters come and attack us: we
are ready to meet them beard to beard.”

Statement before the Battle of Stirling Bridge, 11
September 1297

Mel Gibson, as William Wallace with atrocious Scottish
accent:

“They may take our lives, but they’ll never take our
freedom.”

Tonight’s Sophia will move across the freedoms we have
in law in Australia and what Christian ethics can add to
this discussion, asking what are our responsibilities as
people of faith in this debate about freedom.

The specific freedoms we will touch upon, but without
trying to drive the conversation in a particular direction,
will be freedom of information, speech and religion.

If you’d like to do some homework before getting online
with the group, have a quick read through these:

Freedom of information

<https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/the-foi-act/rights-and-responsibilities/>

Freedom of speech

<https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/the-foi-act/rights-and-responsibilities/>

Freedom of religion

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Completed_Inquiries/jfadt/Religion/issues

UCA response to proposed freedom of religion bill

<https://www.assembly.uca.org.au/news/itemlist/tag/religious%20freedom>

Full submission of UCA

<https://www.assembly.uca.org.au/images/Uniting%20Church%20in%20Australia%20-%20Religious%20Freedom%20Bills%20-%20Second%20drafts%20-%20Submission%20January%202020.pdf>

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Some points of theological reflection to ponder:

- what does it mean to be 'free'?
- free of sin?
- freedom of choice?
- predetermination?
- freedom found in God?

DICTIONARY DEFINITION OF FREEDOM:

- the condition or right of being able or allowed to do, say, think, etc. whatever you want to, without being controlled or limited
- a right to act in the way you think you should
- the state of not being in prison

2 CORINTHIANS 3

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ towards God. Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Now if the ministry of death, chiselled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside, how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory? For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of justification abound in glory! Indeed, what once had glory has lost its glory because of the greater glory; for if what was set aside came through glory, much more has the permanent come in glory!

Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end

of the glory that was being set aside. But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. **Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.** And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

GALATIANS 5:1

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

ISAIAH 61:1-2

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;