

## **Freewill – 27 September 2017**

God has created us in His image – as God has a freewill so do we.

Our will is influenced by external factors – we call these attractions and repulsions – likes and dislikes.

We are born into the world being attracted to getting as much as we can out of the world, lots of money, fame, praise and self-importance. With an aversion to praising others, worshipping, obedience, submission, giving others more than we have and listening to God telling us what to do.

These external factors result in us taking our course through the world – attracted to the 'likes' and repelled from the 'dislikes'.

In creation we see that birds without any obvious reason migrate vast distances – there is an unseen drive within them that causes the swallows to leave these shores at the end of September and come back in April – no one forces them to do it – they just do it of their own will. Britain repels them in late September and Africa attracts them, then it is the opposite way round in April.

Towards the end of the Flood the raven was attracted to the dead bodies presumably floating here and there in the water and had no need to come back to the ark. The dove, however, flew up and down over the water to start with, but in the end the fact there was nowhere to settle and nothing for it to eat was unattractive and it was repelled from the watery waste and attracted to the ark so of its own accord flew back to Noah. And Noah was there ready to receive the dove back to the ark.

We are all gone away from God our Father – 1 Peter 2 v 25 – attracted to the things we see in the world, enjoying the pleasures of the world. We see no attraction in the Bible, prayer, worship, being 'holy' or serving God. We have a freewill – but that freewill leads us into pursuits that are away from God and into things that are disobedient to God – doing our things on the Lord's Day, swearing, sexual adventuring, drugs, drinking, revelling etc – all because we find these things attractive.

However when we are born again of the Holy Spirit of God we begin to see by faith that the attractions of this world are futile and indeed damaging to our soul's well-being and disastrous for our eternal future as never-dying souls. Like the dove the pursuits we were once involved in we begin to find unattractive, repellent and abhorrent. So like the dove we are attracted to where we came from – our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. We return to Him with begging prayer seeking His mercy and grace, we want to know more about Him by reading His word willingly and praying over it so He might reveal more of His truth to us. We feel the contrast between being 'out of place' in the world's attractions and 'at home' in the kind care of our dear Lord Jesus and our heavenly Father and therefore love to worship and praise Him. We still act with freewill, but the external influencing factors have changed – we see the world through the eyes of faith so the outcome of our actions is different to what it once was.

This is why the prodigal son of his own freewill decided to go back to his father in Luke 15 v 17 – he came to himself – he began to see things differently – his repulsion from his father and attraction to the riotous living was gone and his attraction to his father returned – it seemed like the best place he could possibly go now – so he starts his journey back. And in the Bible there are so many encouragements to return to the Lord Jesus – the prodigal was received with open arms by his father. John 6 v 37 – him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.