

On the Trail of Freedom
Paul Kim, Pastor Emeritus
Antioch Baptist Church
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Known as “The Freedom Trail,” the 2 ½ mile path marked by red paint in downtown Boston attracts over a million visitors each year. As you walk along this famous trail you come across various historical sites related to the Revolutionary War. For instance, you can retrace the steps of the brave protestors who confronted British soldiers at the site of the Boston Massacre in 1770. At the Old South Meeting House, you can transport yourself to the events of 1773 where a small band of Patriots snuck out to Griffin’s Wharf at night to dump a shipment of British tea into the Boston Harbor. At the Old North Church you can relive Paul Revere’s midnight ride and if you have an active imagination you might be able to hear the faint echoes of, “One if by land, two if by sea.” Over the years I’ve given countless tours of the Freedom Trail to our church guests and visitors. I remind them that it’s because of the events that occurred here that you are able to be here.

As the national chaplain of the Korean War Veterans Association (KWVA), I’m almost obligated to mention whenever I get the opportunity the words etched on the granite wall at the Korean War Veteran’s Memorial in our nation’s capital—“Freedom is not free.” Our historical monuments, museums, and memorials remind us of the high cost of freedom. America is at our collective worst when we exhibit historical amnesia to the sacrifices of those who have gone before us in blazing the trail of our freedoms. We ought never to forget. We should never take the fact that we live in a free nation for granted.

But more than any human freedom, we should long for freedom from sin and death. Slightly off the path of the Freedom Trail is a plaque that reads: D.L. Moody – Christian evangelist, friend of man, founder of the Northfield schools, was converted to God in a shoe store on this site, April 21, 1855. A young man of humble means experienced freedom in Christ on that date and became the most influential evangelist of his generation, leading countless men, women, and children to Christ. D.L. Moody preached the simple but powerful message that Jesus came to this world to die on the cross so that whosoever believes in Him shall not die, but have eternal life. It was the Father’s plan of salvation to set us free from sin and death through His son’s costly sacrifice.

Juneteenth (June 19th) is a historical date that commemorates the event in 1865 whereby Major General Gordon Granger announced to the enslaved in Galveston, Texas that they were indeed free. This was more than two years after Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation but many slaves did not or were prevented from hearing the good news. But imagine if the slaves heard this announcement, just shrugged their shoulders and went back to work as slaves! Apostle Paul writes to the church in Galatia that Jesus has set us free and that we are not to go back to our old life to put on a yoke of slavery (Galatians 5:1). Jesus paid it all for us to have true freedom. Why should we live as if we have spiritual amnesia and forget about the freedom we have in Christ! Nothing can take that away from us. Not war, pestilence, COVID-19, or any powers and principalities of this world. This is the Good News that we should take to the ends of the earth so that all may be saved. This is the heart of God.

