

FREE INDEED

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John 8:31-36

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Introduction:

Well, we are just coming off of the celebration of the 249th birthday of America. I hope that your day was filled with radical celebration of the freedom that we enjoy in this great nation. And YES, this nation is indeed great, and we're not afraid to say it!

Illustration: I just recently saw a clip on social media of two WNBA announcers commentating on the game when one of them made the comment, "That's what makes America great! Am I right?", referring to being able to have differing opinions with someone yet still get along.

This comment was followed by one of the most awkward 20 seconds of silence I've ever heard in my life. The other commentator, who was clearly a Wokie, couldn't stand to hear America be referred to as great. After this awkward silence, the commentator who made the comment apologized for calling America great and said she ought to rephrase what she meant, even though she didn't have to.

Well, this nation IS great because of the freedom that We The People get to experience! Liberty is to be celebrated because it was achieved at a great price!

I believe, along with our founding fathers, that God is the One who's put within us this deep love and desire for freedom!

Does not our nation's **Declaration of Independence** state...

"We hold these truths to be *self-evident*, that all men are created equal, that they are *endowed by their Creator* with certain *unalienable rights*, that among those are life, *LIBERTY (freedom)*, and the pursuit of happiness."

Now, with all that being said, you might be persuaded to think that I am giving a patriotic message today, but I am not.

I'm certain that you saw or heard the verse John 8:36 "who the Son sets free is free indeed" quoted over the past few days. Pastor Jack even referenced it on Wednesday night when he gave that great message loaded with incredible quotes and prayers from our founding fathers.

Well, the freedom I'll be sharing on today is not regarding the civil liberty that we enjoy as American citizens. Today we'll focus in on the freedom that matters most; the freedom that Jesus came to bring.

What is this freedom all about? It is the freedom from the tyrannical and cruel reign of sin.

There is an enslavement that exists within the lives of countless people who aren't even aware of it. This enslavement is the enslavement to their own sin.

But praise God that there is a solution. Praise God that there is FREEDOM. As we'll learn in today's study, the Son of God, Christ Jesus, can and will provide for us the freedom from sin that we so desperately need!

We're only looking at 6 short verses today that are found in the 8th chapter of John's gospel account; and yet the words of these 6 verses, the words of Christ, can radically alter the course of your life if you understand what our Lord is saying here.

In response to Jesus' teachings of the preceding verses of John 8, if you look back just at vs 30, you'll see that many believe in Him (as the Christ). This is saving faith: a belief and trust that Jesus is the Son of God and a surrender to Him.

This is some helpful context that will help bring clarity to our text today.

1. Defining A Disciple (vs 31)

³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed."

Here we see Jesus address those who "believed Him". At first glance, it may appear like He's speaking to the same people we just saw in verse 30, but upon a more scrutinous examination, I'm not convinced it's actually the same bunch.

Notice how verse 30 states that there were many who "believed IN Him", whereas we see the people Jesus is speaking to in verse 31 described as those who "believed Him". This distinction is clear, and it is important.

Those who believed IN Him (vs 30) are those who put saving faith in Him, trusting that He was indeed the promised Messiah.

"The phrase suggests faith in the fullest sense. They cast themselves on Him, so to speak. The words imply energetic faith in a person, something to be distinguished from mere acceptance of certain statements as true." – **John Phillips**

On the other hand, those who "believed Him" (vs 31) are they that listened to and even affirmed His teachings, yet did not commit themselves to Him.

An affirmation of the teachings of Christ without a surrendering to His lordship does not result in salvation.

As much as I appreciate his intellect, Jordan Peterson, from the outside looking in, is an example of one who affirms the teachings of Christ but has yet to surrender to the lordship of Jesus.

Jesus is speaking directly to those who believe the things He was saying but weren't actually His disciples.

In light of this, Jesus goes on to define what it really means to be one of His disciples.

He clearly states that it is those who ABIDE IN HIS WORD that are His disciples. This is still the case today, 2000 years later!

A true disciple is not simply one who just talks the talk (that's easy); true disciples of Jesus Christ WALK THE WALK. This is what it means to abide in His Word!

“abide” – to remain, to continue, to stay

Simply put, the born-again Christ follower lives their life in accordance to the Word of God! This may seem like common knowledge, but honestly I'm not convinced that it is common knowledge anymore!

Jesus' use of the word indeed here is incredibly significant.

“indeed” – truly, actually, in reality

Why would Christ use such a term? The answer is because He was no stranger to the fact that many claimed and would claim to be His disciples that weren't actually His disciples!

If we're looking for the benefits of Christ's salvation but are unwilling to surrender our lives to Him and live by His Word, SOMETHING IS WRONG! The Word of God is clear on this.

Matthew 16:24

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Luke 6:46

⁴⁶ “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”

John 14:15 (AMP)

¹⁵ “If you [really] love Me, you will keep *and* obey My commandments.

To sum it all up...

A disciple of Christ is defined by their obedience and continuance to the Word of God.

2. The Trajectory of Truth (vs 32)

³² *And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

Here we see Christ reference the truth: both what we're to do with the truth, and what the truth does for us (where the truth takes us//the trajectory of it).

Though this lost world that we live in knows little to nothing about truth, it is not something that our God has left unclear for us.

"truth" – what is *objectively* true/correct

Truth is that which is *actually* correct and not subject to opinion. A key thing to understand about truth is that GOD determines truth, we do not.

In Jesus' high priestly prayer for His disciples, He clearly defines truth for us...

John 17:17

¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. **Your word is truth.**

Truth is that which God says is objectively correct. Truth comes from Him. We don't need to go on some quest for it; it's actually right here on our laps; it is the WORD OF GOD!

It is the TRUTH (the Word) that sets the disciple of Christ apart from the godless world. If we actually live by the truth, our lives will look radically different than those who don't follow Christ. AND THIS IS GOOD!

- **Application:** Sadly, we're often so scared of being different, but this is literally what we're supposed to be! We're called to be different! Living by the truth of God's Word makes us *different!* If we don't look different from the world, that's a problem.

Again, in the upper room Jesus tells His disciples that HE is the truth...

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, **the truth**, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 1:14

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and **truth**.

While standing on trial before Pilate, Jesus utters these remarkable words regarding truth...

John 18:37

³⁷ Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?"

Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

Those who are "of the truth" are they that hear, listen to, and obey the voice (Word) of Christ.

Looking back at John 8:32, we see Jesus say that there is something we are to do with the truth. His disciples are to KNOW the truth.

"know" – to become acquainted with, to understand

This is a knowledge that is rooted in experience.

Application: You and I are to have a radical experience with the truth of God!

When we know the truth in the way Christ is referring to here, we are set on a trajectory toward freedom!

"free" – to liberate, to grant freedom to, to deliver

The amazing thing about the truth is, by nature, it exposes lies and deception for what they truly are! Lies are really easy to believe until truth comes along and sheds its exposing light on them!

Application: We all used to think we were doing just fine and would somehow manage to wind up in heaven by being a good person until we were hit square between the eyes with the truth of God which told us otherwise and showed us our need for CHRIST! This is exactly how knowing the truth liberates us!

Contrary to what the naysayers of this world might say, living according to the Word of God is living in true freedom! You'll never be freer than when you're obeying the truth of the Scriptures!

Psalms 119:45

⁴⁵ And I will walk at liberty,
For I seek Your precepts.

To sum up this point of the truth making us free...

The Holy Spirit of TRUTH uses the truth of the Word of God to expose deception and awaken you to your true spiritual condition of helplessness and brings you to Christ, who is the truth!

3. Slaves or Sons (vs 33-35)

³³ *They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free?’”*

³⁴ *Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵ And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.*

So, the Jewish leadership have just now heard Jesus make an incredibly radical statement about the truth and the freedom that the truth brings. They hear Him mention their need for freedom and they take great offense.

They point to their heritage as descendants of Abraham to give Jesus some sort of rebuttal as to why they don’t need this freedom He’s telling them of. Unfortunately, many Jewish *and* non-Jewish people still think in this same way to this very day.

Let’s be clear on something: we absolutely believe that the Jews are indeed God’s chosen people, but we also believe that they still need freedom from their sin that cannot be obtained through their heritage or their keeping of the law!

Jews and Gentiles alike need the freedom that only Christ can bring! The Jewish people looking to their heritage as their reason for not needing the freedom Christ brings is no different than a Gentile looking to their good works or religiosity as a means of freedom.

I say this because I’ve recently seen many people lumping together those who hold to dispensational theology (which we do) with those who hold to dual-covenant theology (which we reject). We simply believe that God is NOT DONE with Israel, He’s going to keep His promises to Israel, and He has an incredible plan to awaken and redeem them in the end times THROUGH CHRIST JESUS!

Make no mistake, nobody gets a side door into heaven; there is only one way for EVERYONE, Jew and Gentile alike, and that is through faith in the sacrificial lamb of God, Jesus Christ. This is why we, as Gentiles, are commanded by God to provoke the Jewish people to jealousy; we know the Messiah that they are looking for!

The reason why Jesus’ hearers took offense to His words about needing to be free was not because He was incorrect about their state of bondage, but because *He was correct*, and they were completely blind to their bondage.

Application: How many millions, even billions, live their lives in this same spiritual stupor today. Countless people live for sin, thinking they're living the life of freedom, when in all actuality, it's the exact opposite. They are actually slaves to their sin, blind to the shackles that bind them.

They essentially ask Jesus, "how can you say we need to be made free?", to which He responds with some powerful and challenging words...

He tells them that the one who commits sin is a slave of sin.

The tense that this word "**commit**" is used carries with it the meaning of a *life of sin*. What this means is that those who live a life for sin are living under the power and rule of sin.

Application: Apart from Christ, this is the only life we know how to live. This is our default lifestyle!

The greatest lie the devil ever sold was what he told Eve in the Garden of Eden. He deceived her into thinking that the better life, *the free life*, is the one where you do what you want and disregard what God has said. THIS IS BONDAGE. THIS IS SLAVERY.

Romans 6:16

¹⁶ Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?

"**slave**" – one who is owned by another, whose entire livelihood and purpose is determined by their master; to be given up to the will and dominion of another

This is precisely what sin does to us! It rules over us as a cruel master.

"There is no slavery like this. Sin is indeed the hardest of all taskmasters. Misery and disappointment by the way, despair and hell in the end, —these are the only wages that sin pays to its servants. To deliver men from this bondage, is the grand object of the Gospel. To awaken people to a sense of their degradation, to show them their chains, to make them arise and struggle to be free, —this is the great end for which Christ sent forth His ministers. Happy is he who has opened his eyes and found out his danger. To know that we are being led captive, is the very first step toward deliverance." – **J.C. Ryle**

We can see sin's desire to rule over us as a master all the way back in Genesis 4, when God warned Cain before he murdered his brother Abel...

Genesis 4:6–7

⁶ So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, **sin lies at the door**. And its desire *is* for you, but you should rule over it."

“**lies**” – to lurk, to behave sneakily in order to ambush a prey

Illustration: Mountain lions are predators that hunt in this exact way. They stalk their prey for miles and their prey have no idea. Once the prey is most vulnerable, the giant cat pounces on it and delivers a fatal bite right to the neck. SIN IS LIKE THAT!

Here in Genesis 4, it's like God is telling Cain, “Cain, you're playing with fire here. You don't realize it, but there's a mountain lion named sin that's been stalking you and is about to ambush you!”.

But God also tells him that “he should rule over it”. God tells him, “it doesn't have to be this way, Cain. You can rule over sin if you listen to what I'm telling you”. Sadly, Cain didn't heed the warning.

Still today, sin is eager to enslave us and keep us under its dominion.

But according to Christ, what is the result of being a slave of sin? The answer is “not abiding in the house forever”.

John 14:2

² In **My Father's house** are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

What Jesus is saying here is that, if you remain as a slave of sin, you will not inherit that which is prepared and appointed for sons (glory//everlasting life).

The good news for us is that, though we are all slaves of sin, there is a way for us to be adopted as sons!

While a slave does NOT abide in the house forever, A SON DOES! Slaves of sin have a terrible future appointed for them, but the sons of God have a glorious future in store.

The reality is, you are either a slave or a son.

This begs the question; how do we go from being a slave to a son?

*IT IS ONLY THROUGH JESUS THAT WE CAN BE TRANSFERRED FROM
ENSLAVEMENT TO SONSHIP.*

4. Forever Free (vs 36)

³⁶ *Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

In our final verse of study, Jesus clearly states that He (the Son) is the only way to be liberated from the slavery of sin and transformed into a child of God.

The very structure of His declaration indicates that there is a *singular path to freedom* and that there are many counterfeit ones! The only way to be TRULY FREE is if THE SON makes you free!

Only Christ has the power to break the binding shackles of our sin and bring us into the beloved family of God.

How did Jesus do this for us? He did it through the incredible act of REDEMPTION.

“**redemption**” – a liberation/deliverance by payment of a ransom

- “**ransom**” – the payment that is given in exchange for the freedom of one who is held captive

We’ve already stated that our sin is the cruel master that held us captive. We were unable to get free from its terrible rule over us.

But, though we were held captive by our sin, A RANSOM HAS BEEN PAID FOR US TO BE FREE. AND HE HAS A NAME: JESUS OF NAZARETH!

Our ransom was not a dollar amount because no amount of money would do. Something much more costly had to be used in exchange for our freedom.

Our redemption, our liberation from sin’s terrible yoke, is only possible by the blood of Christ which was poured out on the cross of Calvary, nearly 2000 years ago!

He Himself is our ransom!

Matthew 20:28

²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Colossians 1:13–14

¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

1 Peter 1:18–19

¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Ephesians 1:7

⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

Revelation 5:9

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying:
 “You are worthy to take the scroll,
 And to open its seals;
 For You were slain,
 And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
 Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

Isaiah 61:1

¹ “The Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon Me,
 Because the Lord has anointed Me
 To preach good tidings to the poor;
 He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
 To proclaim liberty to the captives,
 And the opening of the prison to *those who are bound*;

Illustration: Quakers and abolitionists in the 18th and 19th Century who were motivated by their Christian faith to buy slaves and then immediately release them as free men and women

What Jesus does for us is far better than this! He pays for our release by His blood, which thereby makes us free, but then He also brings us into His Father’s family and house to enjoy all the rights and privileges of SONS!

There is a LIBERATION and an ADOPTION that takes place in Christ!

Romans 8:14–17

¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

This is all SO AMAZING. And yet, what is so sad is that far too many who’ve been made sons and daughters by being freed by Christ do not actually live as though they’re free.

Though we’ve had our shackles of sin decimated by Christ, sometimes we still subject ourselves to the bondage of sin.

Illustration: There are some children of God who've *truly* been made free by the Son and yet are living like their sin has them on a leash, as though they were a dog on a walk with his master.

Romans 6:6–7, 14

⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin.

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Jesus has both set us free from the PENALTY of sin, which enables us to go to heaven, AND the POWER of sin, which enables us to live in FREEDOM!

Truly, we have all we need to live free!

2 Corinthians 3:17

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

Because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit inside of every child of God, we have all we need to resist temptation and live in freedom!

We must stop the victimhood mentality and making of excuses when it comes to our sin! God will not tolerate this thinking because He literally put His Spirit of power in us; the very Spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead!

Here's how we must see it: when we bring ourselves back under sin's rule, we are CHOOSING to pick up the broken shackles and place them back on our wrists again. And when we do this, I just imagine Jesus looking at us heartbroken because of all that He's done to free us.

Galatians 5:1

¹ Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and **do not be entangled again** with a yoke of **bondage**.

“My dear friends, it is possible to be saved from sin, not only from the guilt of sin, but it is possible to be saved from the power of sin through regeneration and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is what Jesus meant when He said, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” The truth of which He spoke is the blessed program of regeneration given us in His holy Word. When men believe this message, they are set at liberty because of the new birth. As they go on in fellowship with God, walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, they are not dominated by the lust of the flesh, but they walk in the freedom of the children of God.” – **H.A. Ironside**

Conclusion:

And so, I ask you today, has the Son made you free?

You must come to Him in faith for this to happen to you. Anyone who comes to Him understanding their inability to free themselves from the slavery of sin is received by Him.

Christ Jesus, in His mercy, will redeem you from the penalty and power of sin so that you may be brought into the family of God as an adopted son or daughter.

John 1:12

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

If you're awakening to the bondage that your sin has you in and realizing your need for Christ to free you, I am going to invite you to do something radical: I'm inviting you to come forward to put your faith in Christ!

You cannot continue to live in the bondage you've been living in; it is time for you to be made free by the Son of God!

Now, before we wrap up, there is another group of people in here today that I'd like to speak to today before we close.

Maybe you're a child of God who's been made free by Christ and yet you are not truly living in the freedom that He's provided for you.

Maybe you've realized today that you're that person putting those broken shackles back on. You're seeing now that your sin has still been exercising dominion over you even though you're dead to it.

It's as though Christ would say to you today, "what are you doing living in the things I've freed you from? You're my son! BE FREE! WALK IN MY FREEDOM".

***Church family, for the sake of privacy, would you bow your heads and close your eyes for this moment?

If you're a child of God today, but God is speaking to you right now that you really need to walk in the freedom Christ has provided for you and stop being ruled by your sin that He died for, would you just raise your hand right where you're at so that I may pray for you?