

DO WHAT JESUS TELLS YOU SO YOU CAN BE FREE!

INTRODUCTION:

I don't think I'm going out on a limb to suggest that the word "freedom" has taken on a whole **new meaning**—or at least a **new emphasis**—over the last year and a half. Although I obviously have no way of proving it, I'm quite certain that **I personally** have talked (or thought) more about **freedom** in the past 18 months than I have during the rest of my life combined! It is quite possible that you have, too!

--From March to May 2020, it was "I want to be free to have church services with more than 10 people."

--After that, it was "I want to be free to go into stores—especially Menards—without a mask."

Now—**for some**—it is: "I want to be free not to wear a mask at work—**without** having to take the Covid **shot** first!" (Yes; I purposely said **shot** and not vaccine 😊!)

We **love** and value our freedom, don't we? But what **is** freedom?

Is freedom doing **what we** want to do, **when we** want to do it, and the **way we** want to do it? Some think so. In fact, there is a dictionary definition that says almost that very thing: "*the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants **without hindrance** or restraint.*"

Any **problems** with that definition? Do we **really** want people to have the freedom to **drive as fast** as they want down the freeway—or through town? We don't, do we?

Take your Bibles and turn to John 8, beginning with vs 31. Please follow along as I read through vs 38.

Notice again verses 31: "If **you**"—those who have believed on Me—"continue in my word" (meaning, **read** it and **do** it) "**you shall know the truth**" (vs 32) "**and the truth shall make you free.**"

In other words, Jesus is saying: "Do what I tell you so you can be free!" Sounds kind of **radical** doesn't it; maybe even a bit **contradictory**.

--How can being **submissive** to the **words and will** of someone else bring freedom?

--And freedom from **what**? That's what we are going to look at this morning.

Let's consider first, **1. The Promiser of Freedom**

Who is the Promiser? We have the answer in v 31 "Then said **Jesus**..." Jesus is the one who makes the promise that "the truth shall make you free."

A promise is only as good as the **truthfulness—and ability**—of the person who makes the promise, right?

A. The truthfulness of Jesus' Words

How trustworthy are the **words** of Jesus? He **is the Truth** so He obviously speaks the truth!

--We know that from **John 14:6** "I am the Way, **the Truth**, and the Life..."

--We also see that a couple of times in this chapter:

V 40 "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath **told you the truth**..."

V 45 "And because **I tell you the truth**, ye believe me not."

V 46 "Which of you convinceth me of sin? **And if I say the truth**, why do ye not believe me?"

We can count on this promise of freedom because of the **truthfulness** of Jesus' words. We can also count on this promise because of B. The trustworthiness of Jesus' character

How could Jesus make the claim that if you continue in His words, you would be free? The short answer? Because He was God!

i. He came from God and was sent by God

V 16 (end) "for I am not alone, but I and the Father that **sent me**."

V 18 (end) "the Father that **sent me** beareth witness of me."

V 29 "And He that **sent me** is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him."

Not only did Jesus **come from** God and was **sent by** God...

ii. He claimed to be one with God

V 19 Knowing me is knowing the Father, Jesus said

V 23 “Ye are from beneath; I am **from above**: ye are of this world; **I am not of this world.**”

V 58 “Before Abraham was, I am.” Jesus was claiming to be the “I am” that spoke to Moses out of the burning bush; that’s why they wanted to stone Him to death in v 59.

The **Promiser** of freedom is Jesus—God in the flesh—whose name is Truth. It is a promise that **cannot be broken** because the One who spoke it cannot lie—and cannot fail!

Let’s consider next...**2. The People to whom the Promise of Freedom was made**

Who did Jesus make this promise to? Was it **everyone**—or was it to a **select** group?

Look again at vs 31 “If **ye** continue in my word...” Who is Jesus talking to? Who is the “**ye**”?

We know from the beginning of the verse: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which **believed on Him...**”

Jesus was saying this to **believers**—those who had trusted Him.

When did they believe on Him? When had they **become** believers?

About **5 minutes** before this! In other words, they were new-borns! They were brand-new, baby Christians, who had been converted in the sermon they had just heard!

How do we know that? Notices verses 23-24. For the sake of time, we are going to jump ahead to v 30 “As He spake these words, many **believed** on Him.”

If they were a literal new-born baby, they’d still be crying! If they were a fawn, they wouldn’t have even tried standing up yet. And yet, Jesus tells them that they can become a **true** disciple—a true follower of Him—and be made free!

Let that sink in. If you are a believer—regardless of your physical or spiritual age—you can be made free! Jesus doesn’t exclude them because of the “newness” of their faith.

--He doesn’t say, ‘if you are over 20...or 40...or 60, you can become a true disciple’—and be made free.

--And He doesn’t say, ‘if you are educated—or go and get educated—you can be made free!

The question begging to be answered, though, is **free** from what? **What** is it that Jesus is promising freedom **from**? Before we delve into the promise, we need to look at...

3. The Prerequisites of the Promise

There are **two kinds** of promises in God’s Word—**conditional and unconditional**.

A. Unconditional Promises in God’s Word

An **unconditional** promise is one that God is **going to do no matter what**—it is not dependent on anyone or anything. There are no strings attached; there are no conditions or circumstances that will make it void.

Here are a couple that most of us are familiar with.

1) Jesus’ promise that He would return some day. In John 14:3, Jesus said “I will come again.” That is an **unconditional promise** that will happen no matter what.

--It doesn’t matter if we **believe it** or not

--It doesn’t matter if we are **expecting it** and looking for it or not

--It doesn’t matter if there are those who don’t want it to happen—it is going to happen!

2) God’s promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb 13:5). That promise is **not** to everyone—it is only for **believers**. Why do I make that distinction? Because God **will leave those** that die without trusting Christ! If we die without Christ—if we die in our sins—God will not be in hell comforting us—He will have **forsaken** us!

That is why I urge you each week to receive Christ, to trust Him as your Savior!

To believers, the promise that God will never leave us is **unconditional**. God will **always** be with us—no matter what! It is **not dependent** on whether we are going to church...or being a good Christian...or reading our Bibles...or praying. It is a promise that He has made—and a promise that He will **always keep**!

B. The conditions of this promise

The promise here, though, is a **conditional** promise. It has strings attached. There are pre-requisites; there are things **we must do** in order for the promise of freedom to be fulfilled in our lives. It will not happen “no matter what”—there are requirements of us.

What is **our** part; what does God require **us to do** before He keeps His promise to make us free?

Verse 31 again “If ye continue in my word...”

What does that mean? Does it mean we are to walk around with our noses in the Bible all day long? No; it doesn’t mean that. But it does mean we should be **reading** what Jesus said so we can **do what** Jesus said.

Adam Clarke wrote the following: “It is not enough to receive God's truth - we must retain and walk in it. And it is only when we receive the truth, love it, keep it, and walk in it, that we are the genuine disciples of Christ.”

William Barclay: “Discipleship involves constant obeying of the word of Jesus. We study it not simply for academic satisfaction or for intellectual appreciation, but in order to find out what God wishes us to do. The disciple is the learner who learns in order to do. The truth which Jesus brought is designed for action.”

Let’s **pause here** for a moment and consider a couple of questions.

Question 1) How **important** is God’s Word to you?

Job 23:12 “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips; I have **esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.**”

Jeremiah 15:16 “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and **thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart...**”

Question 2) What is your **motivation** for reading God’s Word?

Why do you read it? Do you read it to “check it off” your “to-do” list—or do you read it w/an **intent** to obey?

Notice the words God said to Joshua in **Joshua 1:8** “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, **that thou mayest observe to do** according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

Meditate on God’s Word so you can **do** God’s Word—and when you do God’s Word, your way will be prosperous and you will have good success!

Although I’ve already pointed it out, I want to make sure we don’t miss it. **Who** is God saying this to? **Brand new** Christians, right? Sometimes we fall into the habit of thinking that Christians won’t **really get** serious about getting into their Bibles until they’ve gone to church for awhile...or until they get older...or until they go through some hard knocks in life.

Jesus said to **newborns in the faith** that **if you continue** in my word, you are true disciples. He went on to say that **continuance in**—obedience to—His word would **do something** for them. It would meet the conditions of the promise that He was making—that they would be free. Free from what? What is the promise of freedom?

4. The Promise of Freedom

A. Freedom from the Power of Sin

When we become a child of God, we no longer have to be a slave to sin. Its power in our life is broken because the Holy Spirit is now living within us. **Unsaved people** don’t have that ability; Jesus says as much in v 34 “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.”

Romans 6:16-17 “Know ye not, that to **whom ye yield** yourselves servants to obey, **his servants ye are** to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? ¹⁷ But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”

You can **choose** who and what you are going to yield to now. You don't have to be the servant of sin! A child of God can break addictive, harmful habits in their life. They can be free from addiction to **alcohol...or drugs...or gambling...or pornography**. They can have freedom from these things by continuing in Christ's Word!

B. Freedom from the Performance of Sin

About now, some of you might be thinking ‘Wait a minute, Pastor! Are you suggesting that Jesus is promising that if we obey His Word, we won't sin anymore?’ No, not saying that at all!

What I **am** saying, though, is this—it will help you sin **less**! Ever hear this quote attributed to John Bunyan—“Sin will keep you from this book—or this book will keep you from sin”?

More importantly, isn't that what **Psalm 119:9, 11** says? “Wherewithal shall a young man **cleanse** his way? **by taking heed** thereto according to thy word. ¹¹ Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I **might not sin against thee.**”

Reading and obeying God's Word can free us from the power of addictive sin but can also help prevent “day-to-day” sin in our lives.

C. Freedom from the Products of Sin

What are some of the by-products of sin? What comes along with it? Two of “the biggies” are guilt and shame. What is the cure for guilt and shame?

Confessing our sin and forsaking our sin, right? But we also desire **assurance of forgiveness**. Where does that come from? God's Word, right, and trusting what it says—not how we feel!

I John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

D. Freedom from the Pressures within

Here's what I mean. Does being a Christian **exempt us** from problems and trouble?

Nope! Jesus said as much in John 16; let's turn there.

Notice v 33 “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world **ye shall have tribulation**: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

--Bad things happen to believers just like they happen to unbelievers, right?

--Things like cars...and furnaces....and air conditioners **break** down for us just like they do for unbelievers.

--Garages and houses can burn down—and buildings can fall down—for us just like for unbelievers.

--And we can break bones...or get cancer...or lose loved ones, the same as unbelievers do.

We **won't be free** from the problems that happen **to us** by being in God's Word, but we **can be free** from the pressure that problems create within us!

How? Because continuing in God's Word—reading it and obeying it—can give **peace** like Jesus says right here. God's Word reminds us that Jesus is **with us** in the storm...and has promised to **stay with us** during the storm...and is **not surprised** by the storm...and is **more powerful** than the storm.

--Being in God's Word can **free** us from the anxiety...and the confusion...and the fear...and the sleeplessness...and the worry that often comes with trials.

So how is it with you?

Are you bound by the power of addiction; is there something in your life that you are a slave to?

If so, get into God's Word—and obey what it says!

--Do you sin more than you want to? I think we would all say “yes” to that? Get into and obey God's Word!

--Are you burdened and bothered by guilt and shame? Get into and obey God's Word?

--Are trials in your life bringing fear and worry? Get into God's Word and obey it to be free!

Do you really want freedom from all these things and more? Jesus promises to give it—but there is something you need to do. Jesus will do His part. The question is, will you do yours?

Concluding Remarks

1. What is the most important freedom? Not to be free from masks—or live in a free nation. The most important freedom is to be free from the penalty of your sins! The only way to be free from that is to receive Jesus as your personal Savior.

Here's an interesting quote I read this week: "None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free." There are people that falsely believe they are free from the penalty of sin—but they are not. Are you?

2. Jesus promises us freedom, but that promise has strings attached—we need to read and obey in His Word. Are you doing that? Jesus told baby Christians—newborns—to do that. Are you? If not, why not make a decision to start doing that today....