

Life in His Name – Part 21
Free Indeed – John 8:30-38
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – July 2nd, 2023

Intro:

- This week on July 4th, we celebrate our freedom from British rule to govern ourselves as a nation. We are the recipients of freedom because of the vision, love, and sacrifice of others who fought and died for our freedom.
- There is another who fought and died for our freedom because of His vision, love, and sacrifice. He overcame an enemy that seeks to enslave, use, and destroy not just one group of people but all the people of the world. This enemy is insidious and powerful and lives in the heart of us all. This enemy is sin, which enslaves all humankind.
- Jesus, the greatest of all emancipators, the hero of all humankind, conquered sin and death by His sinless life and death-defeating resurrection, breaking us free from the power of sin and death. And who the Son sets free, is free indeed.
- This morning we will continue walking through the confrontation Jesus was having with the religious leaders as the crowds listened to what was being said. In our passage from John chapter eight, we will understand the essential reality of what a true disciple does, is, and has become in the word, by the truth, and through the grace of Jesus.
- If you were with us last week, you will remember that we concluded that message in verse thirty of John chapter eight, which reads:

John 8:30 HCSB

As He was saying these things, many believed in Him.

- Now because of this, Jesus shifts His focus to those who believed in Him, believed that He is who He claimed to be, the Christ, the Son of God. As He instructs them, He teaches us on what defines a true disciple.

John 8:31 HCSB

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, you really are My disciples."

True disciples continue in the word of Jesus.

- This is a significant statement. This is a defining statement. By definition, a disciple is one who follows another, listens and learns from them, obeys their teaching, and imitates them to become like them. In this case, they are disciples of Jesus, who is the Christ. We commonly call these people "Christians" – those who follow Christ.
- Jesus turned to those who had believed Him, who considered themselves disciples—who would call themselves Christians in our day—and said that this is how we know who really is a Christian, who is a true disciple. This person will continue in, remain in, hold to, follow, abide in, and persist in my word. If you do, you are *really* my disciple. The theological description of this is called "perseverance of the saints."
- What this means is that not everyone who calls themselves a Christian is a Christian. A true disciple, a real Christian, is one who "continues in My word" – continues to follow and live in and through and by the Word of God – in the humility, truth, grace, and power that works in us by the Holy Spirit.

- I have had people in church year after year after year who have not continued in the word of Jesus. I have friends and family members who have shown themselves not to be true disciples. I hope all of us in this room will continue in the Word of God—the Word in us and us in the Word—that we will all remain in Christ. Perseverance in following the word of Jesus matters, and it defines one as a Christian.
- Jesus said, "If you continue in My word, you really are My disciples," and then connected that statement with this one:

John 8:32 HCSB

"And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

True disciples are freed by the truth of Jesus.

- Please see this connection: by continuing in the word of God, then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. This is not "any and all truth will set you free." This is *the* truth from the Word of the Lord that will set you free. It is funny and sad how often this phrase is taken out of context by many to mean that *any* truth "may set you free." Movies have quoted it (Liar, Liar), schools have adopted it as their motto (John Hopkins University), and even the CIA has it etched in stone on the wall of their original building. All of these uses are taken out of context, and in the CIA's case, the truth may put you in jail, not set you free.
- Jesus is talking about the truth of the word of God, which of course, was embodied in Him, the Word made flesh. And if you remain in the word of truth and this Word abides in you, you will know the truth, and that truth will set you free. So we have to ask, "Free from what?" Free from physical bondage? Or free from emotional bondage? Or the jail of our thoughts? Some of the Jews listened to Jesus say this and had the same question, so they said:

John 8:33-34 HCSB

"We are descendants of Abraham," they answered Him, "and we have never been enslaved to anyone. How can You say, 'You will become free'?"

34 Jesus responded, "I assure you: Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin."

- Knowing the truth of who Jesus is and believing in and following Him – that truth will save us from our slavery to sin. This is the real deliverance we need, because sin has enslaved us all. This freedom is greater than any earthly freedom you can experience, from jail, or addiction, or debt. This is freedom from the enslaving power and eternal penalty of our sin.
- The Apostle Paul, unpacking these words of Jesus, put it this way:

Rom 6:20-23 ESV

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- When we were slaves of sin, we did not follow the way of righteousness. We were "free" from following it, and we lived on the path of our sin, doing whatever we wanted. The "fruit" of these

actions did not turn out well at all. The results of these actions were bitter, and thinking back on those things causes us shame, and those things lead to death (eternal).

- But in Christ, we have been set free from our bondage to sin and now serve another—God. In God, the "fruit" that is produced leads to sanctification (becoming more and more like Christ), and it ends not in eternal death, but eternal life. What we earn by our sin is death, but what we receive in Christ as a gift is eternal life.
- Now this does not mean that those who are indeed Christians and are indeed free of sin never sin any longer. How I wish this was the case. What it means is that we have been freed and walked away from following and serving sin to following and serving Christ.
- Then in His teaching, Jesus unpacks the difference between a slave and a son by saying:

John 8:35-36 HCSB

A slave does not remain in the household forever, but a son does remain forever. 36 Therefore if the Son sets you free, you really will be free.

True disciples are adopted through the grace of Jesus.

- The difference between a slave and a son is that a slave is temporarily connected to a family, and a son is permanently in the family. A child is in the family forever. Therefore, if the Son of God emancipates you, you are adopted as a child of God. And if the Son sets you free, you really will be free, with a freedom that remains forever and ever.

Rom 8:14-16 ESV

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Gal 3:26 ESV

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

Eph 1:4b-6 ESV

In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

- This is the permanent state of the ones who believe in Christ and show themselves to be true children of God by continuing in the word of Jesus. We are both a true disciple, a true Christian, and an eternal child of God. We have been freed from the slavery to sin and have passed from "death to life" (John 5:24). You cannot free yourself from sin; the Son must do this, and if the Son does so, you are truly free.

Conclusion and Communion

- So be encouraged this day to continue to follow and hold to the Word of God. Pray for those who have "fallen away," that they would turn to the way of Christ and truly believe in Him. Praise God for freeing you from the power and eternal penalty of sin and death. Celebrate that in Christ, you and I have been forever adopted into the family of God. Let that fact bring you joy, courage, and faith.
- As we celebrate our freedom as a nation this July 4th, remember to celebrate your greater freedom from sin.

- Receiving communion is a primary way of restating our faith in Jesus Christ and our commitment to abide in Him as He is in us.