

The Path to Spiritual Freedom

John 8: 31-36

As we begin our study tonight, it is important to take a moment and consider the context of this passage. The chapter opens with the Pharisees bringing the adulterous woman before Jesus, seeking her condemnation. Jesus well understood their motives and desires. Clearly her actions were sinful, but she was used simply as a means to tempt the Lord. The Pharisees were more concerned with the response of Jesus than they were the spiritual needs of the woman.

Jesus goes on to reveal Himself as the Light of the world. He rebukes the Pharisees for their unbelief and rejection of truth. Some present that day believed in Christ as the Messiah, but many of the Pharisees remained hard-hearted and defiant.

This leads us to the passage we have read. Jesus is well aware of the condition of their hearts, just as He knows our hearts. Their lack of faith and refusal to embrace Jesus as the Christ, kept them in spiritual bondage. Just as it was with the Pharisees, many remain in spiritual bondage today. Truth has been given and revealed, and yet many refuse to embrace it. Sin creates bondage and Jesus is the only means of being liberated from sin. I want to consider the [principles](#) Jesus discusses as we think on: [The Path to Spiritual Freedom](#).

I. Jesus Speaks of Conversion (31-32) – Keep in mind, Jesus knows His own; He knows those who have believed on Him by faith. Here He speaks of those who have genuinely believed in Him as the Christ and experienced genuine conversion in their hearts. Consider:

A. The Identification (31) – [Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;](#) Many had witnessed the truth with which Jesus spoke. They had experienced the miracles and received enough to believe. Some did believe, while others didn't. Jesus does not speak of the path or conditions of salvation here, but rather the fruit that follows genuine conversion.

- Disciples of Christ, those who embrace Him as Savior and seek to follow Him will be identified as those who continue in the Word. They will literally *dwell or abide* in the Word. They will not merely be a hearer of the Word, but also a doer of the Word. A disciple's life will be guided by the Word and marked through a continuation in the Word. It will be lived in light of the Word and consistent with the teaching of Scripture.

B. The Inclination (32a) – [And ye shall know the truth...](#) Jesus confirms that His disciples will know the truth. Their lives will naturally gravitate toward the truth, given of the Lord through His Word.

- We live in a world where truth is considered to be “fluid.” Many declare there is no such thing as absolute truth. It is often reserved for the individual to determine what is actual truth, and once it is determined, many contend that truth can and does change. Thankfully we are not inclined to embrace such philosophy. We believe truth is absolute and definite. Truth does not change. Society’s perception of truth may change, but the truth of God’s Word abides forever!
- Jesus does not imply that believers will never make a mistake or wrong decision, but one of the benefits associated with conversion is the impartation of truth. We do not have to accept the changing philosophies of life. We have received truth and are able to discern truth.

C. The Independence (32) – *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* Many of the Pharisees continued to embrace the law, being greatly restricted by its demands. Those apart from Christ remained in bondage to sin. Their pursuit of truth through the ways of man only added to their bondage. They were continually striving to obtain righteousness through self effort. Regardless of their efforts, it never seemed to be enough.

- I remember living a life dominated by sin. I remember being bound by the shackles of sin, feeling hopeless in myself to obtain righteousness acceptable to God. I remember trying to measure up to the demands of other men. Regardless of my efforts, I always came up short. I was never able to accomplish enough to please those who held a legalistic point of view. I never accomplished enough through self effort to bring peace to my heart. However, when the Lord saved me, I was set free from all that bondage. The load of sin was lifted, and I realized salvation wasn’t dependent upon my works. I will admit I continued to struggle with the desire to meet the unrealistic demands of those around me, but eventually I was delivered from that as well. Jesus alone can free us from bondage.

II. Jesus Speaks of Captivity (34-35) – Jesus knew all did not enjoy the freedom He gives. He now deals with those who remain in captivity. Notice:

A. The Disclosure (34) – *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.* Jesus was speaking directly to the Pharisees, but we must understand that sin and the bondage it brings is a universal problem. All are born in sin, separated from God. We all inherit the adamic nature due to our birth. Because of sin we are at enmity with God and rebellious toward Him. None are exempt. Apart from a transformational relationship with Christ, all remain bound in sin.

B. The Depravity (34) – Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. We also see the depravity associated with sin. We need to clarify exactly what Jesus refers to in regard to sin. Those who commit sin are servants to sin. That is easy enough to comprehend, but we have already established those who are in Christ have been set free in Him. Jesus isn't speaking of sin in the sense that we might think. The committing of sin He speaks of refers to "a continual action; habitual sin, the purposeful practice of sin." There is no doubt that we all sin, but all do not seek to rebel against God, seeking to fulfill the flesh in continual sin. Believers are chastised when they sin and cannot enjoy living in sin. Jesus speaks of those whose hearts are set toward sin, regardless of the desire of God.

- He also reveals those who practice sin are servants, literally slaves, to their sin. They are bound by the grip of sin. Their main goal in life is to please the flesh and satisfy its lusts. We see this confirmed by a large portion of society. People get to the place where their sole desire is to satisfy the desires of the flesh. Their lives are controlled and dictated by their sinful desires.

C. The Danger (35) – And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: The servant referred to is he who is a slave to his sin. Jesus conveys the danger of such depravity. First there is the application regarding the very nature of a slave. He is not his own. He is literally at the mercy of his master. A slave may be in the home of a particular master one morning and sold to another before night fall. So it is with sin. The lusts of the flesh typically lead down a slippery slope. What begins as a small indulgence often leads to a tragic addiction. The sinner, bound by his sin, is literally at the mercy of his own depraved lusts. He bounces from one house of bondage to another, never experiencing peace and liberty.

- Also Jesus says the servant does not abide in the house forever. As I looked at these words I considered the brevity of life. None are promised tomorrow. Those bound by sin, separated from God, will one day be removed from the house, from this life. What a tragedy to meet God accountable for sin!

III. Jesus Speaks of Conquest – We have considered much, but lastly Jesus reveals the way to obtain victory over sin. Consider:

A. The Person (35b, 36) – but the Son abideth ever.^[36] If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. It's interesting to note the source of confidence for the Pharisees. They were depending on their association with Abraham, v.33. They proclaimed they had never been in bondage. Clearly they missed the spiritual application, but their statement was completely false.

Israel endured a long history of physical and spiritual bondage. Jesus wanted them to look to Him as the Messiah rather than continuing to put their trust and faith in man.

- This truth remains. Humanity will never enjoy spiritual victory while depending on the accomplishments of men. We cannot save ourselves and we cannot overcome sin apart from Christ. He is the source of our salvation and spiritual victory!

B. The Power (36) – *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* They failed to realize they spoke with Jesus, the Son of the living God. All they desired had eluded them, but Jesus was able to provide exactly what they needed. He had the ability to set them free. He had the power to set them free from the bondage of sin and provide perfect peace. They could live victoriously in Christ.

- Our world desperately needs to embrace this truth. Society seeks every means imaginable to find truth, healing, and peace with God. They look to self help regimens, twelve step programs, community involvement, and a host of other efforts. Each of these may improve man's perception of himself, but they do not address the root of the problem. The problem with humanity is linked to their depravity in sin. Jesus alone has the power to cleanse from sin and deliver from its bondage!

C. The Promise (36) – The Pharisees never seemed satisfied. There were actually 613 different laws they tried to keep in order to be acceptable to God. Their work was never ending. There was always the worry of failing to perform every detail of the law. Can you imagine the burden of such theology? Jesus declares those He sets free are free indeed, absolutely and eternally free!

- My, what a blessing that is! I am not trying to work my way in. I am not depending upon my ability in hopes they will be good enough. I am resting completely in the finished work of Christ my Lord. He fully satisfied the righteous demands of God. I am forgiven of sin, pardoned from condemnation, and accepted of God through Christ. I can rest knowing He purchased my redemption and set me free from all bondage!

Conclusion: It is good to know whom the Son has set free is free indeed. Many today are seeking peace within their hearts, but have denied Christ as their Savior. They are yet in their sin and living a dangerous life. The slave of sin will not abide in the house forever. All will stand before the Lord when this life is through.

Do you know Christ as your Savior? Have you believed on Him by faith? If not, seek Him today. Christian, rejoice for the freedom and assurance you have in Christ the Lord.