

**JOHN 8:31-38**  
**FREEDOM IN CHRIST!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 8 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

As we have seen in this chapter, the Scribes and the Pharisees tried to expose Jesus as a fraud!

And how they went about this was they brought to Jesus a woman who was caught in the very act of adultery, and they wanted to know what He was going to do about it!

You see, under the Law both the woman and the man would be stoned to death, but you had to have two witnesses, and they did. Which is creepy to say the least because they had to catch them in the very act of adultery, which means they were watching this take place. They didn't try to stop it because they did not have compassion on people, they would rather use this for their cause. Also, keep in mind they did not bring the man to Jesus.

This was nothing more than a set up and for those who don't think so, listen to what we are told in John 8:6, "**This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. . . .**"

And Jesus knew exactly what they were doing. If He said that nothing should be done, then they would accuse Jesus of breaking the Law of Moses. And these religious leaders knew that Jesus had compassion on people and that is why they set Him up like this! Jesus was not going to have this woman stoned to death because He came to save not condmen!

So Jesus exposes the sins of these religious leaders by writing them on the ground and they all left, they fled away. Conviction did not draw them to Jesus, they let it drive them away because they refused to see their sin and repent of it before God!

All that is left now is this woman and Jesus and since there are no witnesses left, Jesus tells her that He is not going to condemn her but go and sin no more. Don't continue in that lifestyle!

Jesus then speaks to them and tells them that He is the Light of the world and if you don't want to walk in darkness you need to follow Him. And they did not agree with that, they did not like it and they opposed it! They even mocked Jesus by telling Him He did not even know who His father was!

Make no mistake about it, as we have seen, this was a heated debate. And the clincher is found in John 8:24, where Jesus said, "**Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins, for if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins.**"

In other words, Jesus lays it all out before them and tells them, like He has been doing His entire ministry, that He is Almighty God and unless they believe that they will die in their sins!

Again, they did not get it, they refused to see, and they rejected what Jesus was saying, these Jewish religious leaders.

This morning we are going to look at our – ***FREEDOM IN CHRIST!***

It wasn't that long ago that we just took our freedom for granted. But today, more and more of our freedoms are being taken away and I don't think I need to tell you that. You know very well that this is happening.

Let me share this with you. This article is from 2021 and listen to what they say about freedom worldwide, as this is not just an issue in America. We are told,

As a lethal pandemic, economic and physical insecurity, and violent conflict ravaged the world in 2020, democracy's defenders sustained heavy new losses in their struggle against authoritarian foes, shifting the international balance in favor of tyranny.

Incumbent leaders increasingly used force to crush opponents and settle scores, sometimes in the name of public health, while beleaguered activists - lacking effective international support - faced heavy jail sentences, torture, or murder in many settings.

These withering blows marked the 15th consecutive year of decline in global freedom. The countries experiencing deterioration outnumbered those with improvements by the largest margin recorded since the negative trend began in 2006. The long democratic recession is deepening.

The impact of the long-term democratic decline has become increasingly global in nature, broad enough to be felt by those living under the cruelest dictatorships, as well as by citizens of long-standing democracies.

Nearly 75 percent of the world's population lived in a country that faced deterioration last year. The ongoing decline has given rise to claims of democracy's inherent inferiority.

Proponents of this idea include official Chinese and Russian commentators seeking to strengthen their international influence while escaping accountability for abuses, as well as antidemocratic actors within democratic states who see an opportunity to consolidate power.

They are both cheering the breakdown of democracy and exacerbating it, pitting themselves against the brave groups and individuals who have set out to reverse the damage.

And look at what is going on in Canada and how they are arresting truckers and people who are protesting what the government is doing. They are not violent, burning buildings and the like, as we saw with the Black Lives Matter and Antifa protests a few years back and nothing was done to stop it.

But now, with these peaceful protests, people are being arrested, as I have said! Freedoms are being taken away!

In another report, this one from 2019 we are told,

Most Americans surveyed – 92% – think their rights are under siege, according to a poll released Monday.

Americans are most concerned that their freedom of speech (48%), right to bear arms (47%) and right to equal justice (41%) are at risk, says the Harris Poll/Purple Project, which surveyed 2,002 people nationwide. . . .

When asked what rights and freedoms Americans would miss if they were taken away – rather than which ones are threatened – poll respondents’ concerns generally ticked upward.

Sixty-three percent said they would miss freedom of speech if that right was taken away, while nearly half would miss freedom of expression (46%) and the right to equal justice (45%).

“When you look at the things we really value, what makes America so special is these core tenets of our Constitution,” Gerzema said. “I just find it interesting to note how much Americans really value this.”

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Also, in this poll, 35% of Americans were concerned about their freedom to practice their religion.

And as time continues on and we move closer and closer to the start of the Tribulation Period and the Rapture of the Church, I think more and more of our freedoms will be taken away!

Think about this. Have you notice that wherever you are going there are camera's watching you? Yes, it is Big Brother, and they will not only monitor where you go and what you do, but what you buy, and they will even control the information that you get.

Now before I get your blood boiling this morning, I have some great news for you.

You see, in our study this morning we are going to find another type of freedom, a freedom that God has given to us, and it far outshines any other freedom we could imagine.

I have broken the verses we will be looking at this morning into three main points and they are,

***SET FREE IN CHRIST – JOHN 8:31-32***

***BLIND TO BONDAGE – JOHN 8:33***

***SIN ENSLAVES – JESUS LIBERATES – JOHN 8:34-38***

Last time in our study of John chapter 8, we concluded with these words, "**As He [Jesus] spoke these words, many believed in Him.**" John 8:30.

That is where we will pick up our study this morning as we see that there were many who believed, but was that real faith or not? That is what we will see as we look at what true freedom is all about.

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in John chapter 8, beginning in verse 31 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic – ***FREEDOM IN CHRIST!***

**JOHN 8****VERSES 31-32**

Remember back in John 8:30 we saw that “**many believed in Him.**” And now Jesus is speaking “**to those Jews who believed Him.**” So, were they saved?

When you just look at a few verses it does seem like they were saved. But when you read the whole chapter, you see that they are disputing with Jesus. And that tells me, when you hear what they have to say, that they believed in Jesus when He told them what they wanted to hear. But when He didn't, they were in opposition to Him!

Morris put it like this. He wrote, “*This section of the discourse is addressed to those who believe, and yet do not believe. Clearly they were inclined to think that what Jesus said was true. But they were not prepared to yield Him the far-reaching allegiance that real trust in Him implies. This is a most dangerous spiritual state.*”

I would agree with that, and we even see that today. People will believe in Jesus, but as they are denying the things that He has said, what the Word of God has said, what they do and what they say show that they truly do not believe in Him!

You see, this truth that Jesus is speaking about is the truths of God found in the Word of God. It is what God the Father sent Jesus to declare!

And I believe that the truth that Jesus is speaking of here is the truths of God found in the Word of God, as I have said, and that will set you free from the lies of Satan or false doctrine!

Belief does not equal salvation because we are told in James 2:19 that even the demons believe that Jesus is Almighty God and yet, they are not saved!

Why is that?

Because just knowing doesn't save you. Faith is believing and that belief is manifested in the things we do and speak! In other words, faith without works is dead. (James 2:20, 26)

And let me show you this battle for the truth. Paul wrote in II Timothy 2:24-26, "**And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.**"

Paul is speaking of our behavior as Christians, how we treat people because we are a witness to the lost.

The way we behave, the way we talk to people is all about them coming to the truth so that they can get focused back on God and escape the trap that the devil has them in. In fact, they are captive by the devil, and they are doing his will!

So the truth will set them free! But, if they reject what God has said, if they are not set free from the lies of the devil, they will be eternally separated from God in Hell!

The truth will set you free if you listen and obey it! That is the key and that is what Jesus is saying here.

Let me show you how intense this battle is and maybe it will cause you to increase your time of prayer before you share your faith.

In II Corinthians 4:3-4 Paul said, "**But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.**"

Now, as some read that they come to the conclusion, the wrong conclusion, that if Satan has blinded their eyes, it is not their fault that they don't believe, that they don't come to the truth!

That is not true. You see, they too are accountable before God as Paul reminds us in Romans 1:28, "**And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.**"

Here we see a choice for man. Man rejected God and thus, God gave to them what they wanted, and we see that manifested today in all kinds of immorality and wickedness! That is man apart from God!

Yes, Satan has blinded them, but the Holy Spirit has come to open their eyes, but they have to open them, God does not force anyone to do that. But to reject it means you remain in the lies of the devil and apart from God!

Where does our trust in God, our salvation begin?

It begins with repentance before God. In Acts 17:30 we see this point come forth as we are told, "**Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.**"

**“Repent”** and the Greek word is *METANOIA*, and it means *“to have a change of mind.”*

In other words, you were moving away from God, doing those things contrary to God and now you have repented, and you are turning back to God and following Him!

And it is after we have repented of our sins that Paul tells us how we are to live. He wrote in Romans 12:2, “**And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**”

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].**”

That is what Jesus is saying here in John.

*“If you truly believe in what I am telling you, then you will abide in My words, you will follow what I am telling you.”*

And this transformation is done as we fill our lives, our minds with the Word of God because the Word of God is God’s truth!

That means, as we come to Christ, as we repent and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of our lives, God is transforming our lives as we read the Word of God and the Spirit of God opens the Word of God up to us.

In other words, we are thinking like God thinks and not like the world. The world is moving away from God, and we are now moving towards God.

It is as David said in Psalm 119, “**How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. . . . Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.**” Psalm 119:9, 11.

Here's the thing. As you saturate yourself with the Word of God it will keep you clean as the Holy Spirit shows you what is right or what is wrong.

And if you decide to go down the wrong path, the Holy Spirit will convict you as He quickens the Word of God in your heart.

You see, the best defense against sin is a good, strong offense. Or as one writer said, ***"This Book will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this Book!"*** How true that is!

Thus, we should do as Paul tells us in Philippians 4:8-9, **"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."**

Let the Word of God keep you clean as you saturate yourself in God's Word and make it part of your life. The Word of God cleanses us! And that is what Jesus is speaking of here in John chapter 8, abiding in the Word of God which will set us free from the lies, the deception that is out there!

There are many people who know the Word of God, they can give you all kinds of Bible verses off the top of their head without a problem. The problem is that it can be an academic pursuit instead of having a relationship with Jesus, knowing His Word and then living it!

Again, faith apart from works is dead. Works don't save us, but they show or are the evidence for our faith.

When people look at you, what do they see?

And I think we all struggle with this but what people see many times is me, they see you and we want them to see Jesus in us. And the only way that is going to happen is by spending time in His Word and you will know the truth and that truth will make you free.

You will be free from the Law of sin and death because you know that you are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone!

Now, in spite of what we are told about being in the Word, more and more Christians are avoiding the Word of God, they do not read it, not even once a week!

Let me show what I mean. We are told,

A survey from 2021 found that 11 percent of Americans read the Bible daily. Trends in reading habits over four years showed that the majority of Americans never read the Bible, however in 2021 this number dropped to 29 percent of respondents.

Bible readership varies across each demographic, with Millennials most likely to have never read the Bible, whereas the most frequent readers were those aged over 70 years old. . . .

Although figures show that fewer people are reading the Bible, there is still a genuine desire to read the Bible amongst the American population, with 56 percent of those asked in 2019 expressing a wish to read it. Changes in attitudes have not been drastic, but rather it seems that disengagement with the Christian scripture has been a gradual process.

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Do you understand why so many Christians are struggling in their Christian walk! They are not in the Word of God and that leaves them open to what the world has for them and what the world has for them is not good. It will not draw them closer to God but to the world away from God!

Listen to this. Do you know the percentage of Americans that read the Bible once a month or once or twice a year?

It is only 8%! That is shocking to me because I can't imagine how you can draw close to God when you are not spending time with Him in His Word!

Make no mistake about it, the freedom we have in Christ is beyond anything that this world has to offer. Money can't give us that freedom. Your job can't give you that freedom. Your social status can't give you that freedom.

We can only find that freedom in Christ as we abide in His Word, we are a disciple of Jesus!

Look at the number of people today who have been deceived by the devil, they are doing their own thing and are oblivious to the fact that they have been taken captive by the devil and they are under his control.

A good example of this is seen with the Jewish religious leadership of Jesus' day. They knew the Scriptures, but they added to the Scriptures what they thought God was saying and when you add to the Word of God or take away from the Word of God, that is never a good thing.

Their salvation was a works-based salvation and the work never ended and you can never have a relationship with God by good works.

We are saved by grace not by works. That is what made Saul so crazy when he saw Stephen having this relationship with God, one that he wanted but he could never attain it by the Law!

So instead of repenting of his sins and coming to Christ, he went after Christians, arresting them to bring them before the Sanhedrin, or the Jewish Religious Supreme Court you might say.

But on the road to Damascus to arrest Christians, God got a hold of his heart, and his eyes were open, he came to saving faith. Paul came to faith and now He could have that relationship with God!

In other words, he was – ***SET FREE IN CHRIST!***

And every person has that choice to make, but, as we will see, they were – ***BLIND TO BONDAGE!***

And as you will see, this is hilarious if it wasn't so sad, so tragic. Let's read on and you will see what I mean.

### VERSE 33

Remember early on in this chapter when Jesus wrote on the ground, I believe it was various sins, including adultery, and it didn't move them when these Jewish religious leaders saw those sins. They were not convicted.

Then Jesus wrote again on the ground, and I believe he put their names next to each of these sins and when these men saw it, they walked away. They were not convicted; they ignored their sin!

And they are doing the same thing here. You see, they should have been excited to hear the words of Jesus and they should have said to Him, ***“That is great news, wonderful news. Tell us what this all means, how we can be set free by trusting in your Word!”***

But they didn't say that. What they did say is basically, ***“No, we are good. Thanks, but no thanks!”***

Now I have to admit something here and I think it drives my wife crazy. She will ask me something, like, ***“How is your leg pain?”***

And I will respond, ***“It's good!”***

And she knows it is not good, I am in tremendous pain, she can see it on my face. But isn't it interesting how we like to ignore what is going on in us and not deal with it?

Now if they were speaking of physical bondage, that would be hard to imagine.

Maclaren wrote, ***“Was there not a Roman garrison looking down from the castle into the very Temple courts where this boastful falsehood was uttered?”***

The Romans had them in bondage and if they tried to rebel, and sometimes they did, Rome would put an end to it very quickly!

And look at their history. They were in bondage in Egypt for 400 years, in bondage to the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and, like I have said, now the Romans.

So to say they were never in bondage is ridiculous!

I don't think that is the issue here. I think they are speaking of spiritual things, about their relationship with God.

In other words, ***“We are good. Our relationship with God is spot on. We are fine, thank you!”***

I don't think they said ***“Thank you”*** because they hated Jesus and wanted Him dead. But they wanted Jesus to know that they did not need anything that He offered because they were already free, they were good with God!

But just like the physical bondage they were in by the enemy, this time the Romans, they were also in spiritual bondage that kept them from God!

Listen to the way that Ray Stedman put it. He wrote,

But if we read that verse that way we are missing the whole thrust of it. Obviously these men are not stupid. They know their nation is in bondage. But they are not talking about that kind of bondage.

They are talking about freedom before God. They know that this is what Jesus means, and that is what they claim.

What they are saying is, “Nobody tells us how to worship. Even though we have been in bondage to other nations we have never allowed anyone to tell us how to worship God. We have always been free to worship as we like. We will fight to the death for that. We have never let anyone take that away from us.”

That is true of this remarkable nation to this day. They will allow no one to change their way of worship. But they extended that to mean that they, as individuals, were acceptable to God because they were descended from Abraham.

They had not forgotten their bondage to the Romans, rather, they were boasting in the fact that they were part of a chosen race, thus they were confident of God's approval.

I was in Dallas, Texas, last week, and driving in from DFW airport we went right past Texas Stadium, where the Dallas Cowboys play.

That is a unique stadium [the old stadium]. It is not like the Kingdome, the Superdome and other great stadia where football is played, because it is not completely roofed over.

It has a big hole in the roof right over the football field. Spectators are protected but the players are exposed to the elements.

When I asked why I was told, “So God can watch his favorite team!”

That is the way the Cowboys feel about themselves: “God’s Favorite Team!”

That is what these Jews felt, too: “We are God’s favorite people; God’s chosen race.”

There is the real problem. This is what most often keeps people from becoming disciples of Jesus and thus finding the path to freedom: They think they are OK the way they are.

They may need a few minor adjustments here and there but no big changes are required; they feel they are already free.

They look at themselves the same way travel folders describe San Francisco. Have you ever read through a travel folder of San Francisco?

I will tell you what you will not find in it. You will never find in it a paragraph that says, “Although it is one of the most beautiful cities in the country, San Francisco has huge ghetto areas where you can drive for blocks and see people living in squalor, misery, hunger and heartache. This city is noted as one of the most immoral cities in the nation. You can stroll down Castro Street on a beautiful summer’s evening and find yourself surrounded by lesbians, . . . [homosexuals] and transvestites. You will never forget that experience.”

No, you will never find a travel folder that says that. They talk instead about the Golden Gate Bridge, the beauty of the Bay, the wonder of the redwood trees, and the glories of the history of San Francisco, while they ignore the hurt and the heartache.

That is what these people who were listening to Jesus were doing, and that is what we do, too.

You see, they felt, because they were descendants of Abraham, they were good with God. In fact, they believed that the worst Jew would be plucked out of the fires of Hell by father Abraham and the best Gentile would be cast into Hell!

And Gentiles are no different. They believe because they belong to a certain church they are saved. The way they were baptized saved them. Their parents were saved. And you can put all kinds of things in there, like these Jewish religious leaders were doing, and in the end, you are still lost, dead in your trespasses and sins.

If these Jewish religious leaders read their Scriptures, they would have seen how Abraham, the father of their faith, was saved.

Let me share with you how both Abraham and David were saved.

In Romans 4:1-8 we are told, **“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.’”**

Paul wants to drive home this point. If Abraham was justified by works, he could then boast about how hard he worked, what a good person he was and that is why he was allowed into heaven! He can try to boast like that before man, but God won't accept it. Why is that?

As Paul has already said in Romans, **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** Romans 3:23. And yes, even father Abraham!

You see, as Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** There is no room for boasting, none at all. Salvation is a grace gift that we do not deserve!

Therefore, salvation is only found in Jesus and thus God won't accept anything else.

And to further drive home this point, Paul goes back to the Old Testament to show us the faith of Abraham. And as you can see, the Old Testament does not say Abraham was declared righteous because of his good works or the keeping of the Law. The Law was not even around yet, it was still some 430 years or so down the road.

Instead, Genesis 15:6 says that Abraham **“... believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”**

That is interesting to me because the Jewish rabbis believed that *“Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord.”*

And *“We find that Abraham our father had performed the whole Law before it was given.”*

But that is not how Abraham was saved. It was that Abraham believed God and not good works to make him righteous before God. And yet, they ignore what the Scriptures are saying to believe their own doctrine. Very dangerous and yet, many go down this path.

Paul then turns to David another hero of the Jewish faith and a man who was born after the Law of Moses was given, and Paul is going to say that David is saying the same thing. His good works did not save him, but his faith in the coming Messiah did!

And make no mistake about it, King David of the Old Testament knew what it was like to be a guilty sinner. He knew the seriousness of sin and how good it is to be truly forgiven.

In this Psalm that Paul is quoting from, David committed at least three sins here; he broke at least three commandments.

First, he coveted Bathsheba.

Then he committed adultery with her.

And then he had her husband, one of his mighty men murdered.

He committed two capital crimes here and should have been put to death for it, according to what God's Word tells us. But here we see the grace of God extended to David. He did not deserve life, he deserved death. But God freely extended to David life just as He does with us!

Thus, David cries out for God's mercy and God extended mercy to David, not on the basis of David's good works, but upon his faith, which was then accounted as righteousness to David!

Here's the thing. The Old Testament saints, those who died prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus, died believing in the coming Messiah. For us today, we look back at the finished work of the Messiah. But salvation remains by faith and not by works!

But if you think you are good enough to get into heaven by your own good deeds, that is nothing more than self-deception!

One writer put it like this, "*The power of self-deception in the unconverted man is infinite.*" (Ryle)

How true that is! The average person today thinks that he is good enough for heaven or the afterlife, whatever they believe.

And it is not just those who don't call themselves Christians. Many so-called Christians believe that you just have to work your way into heaven! And think about that. Are they any different than these Jewish religious leaders with their beliefs?

No, they are not. Works don't save, Jesus does and that is what these Jewish religious leaders refused to believe, and it is what many Christians and non-Christians believe!

Let me show you what I mean, and this is from 2020, a few years back but things have not gotten better. We are told,

A new survey finds that a majority of people who describe themselves as Christian accept a "works-oriented" means to God's acceptance.

A survey conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University find that American adults today increasingly adopt a "salvation-can-be-earned" perspective. A plurality of adults (48 percent) believe that if a person is generally good, or does enough good things during their life, they will "earn" a place in heaven. Only one-third of adults (35 percent) disagree.

A majority of Americans who describe themselves as Christian (52 percent) also accept a "works-oriented" means to God's acceptance - even those associated with churches whose official doctrine says eternal salvation comes only from embracing Jesus Christ as savior.

Almost half of all adults associated with Pentecostal (46 percent), mainline Protestant (44 percent), and evangelical (41 percent) churches, as well as nearly two-thirds of Catholics (70 percent), hold that view.

While about 65 percent of American adults describe themselves as Christians, only about half (54 percent) believe they will experience heaven after they die.

Only one-third of adults (33 percent) believe they will go to heaven solely because of confessing their sins and embracing Jesus as their savior.

Another one-in-five expecting to experience heaven are counting on earning their way in or because they embrace universalism (i.e., that God will let all people into heaven). . . .

**What It Means:** Christians who believe that salvation can be earned need to read the New Testament.

- [bit.ly/3dprKuk](http://bit.ly/3dprKuk)

I like that closing statement about what this means – ***“Christians who believe that salvation can be earned need to read the New Testament.”***

And if you think you can work your way into heaven, are you really saved? I don’t think so. If we enter in by works, then God owes us heaven and really, Christ died in vain! (Galatians 2:21)

What is the answer to those who feel this way? What is the answer to those who think they can work their way into heaven?

It is the answer that Jesus gave them, **“... ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”** John 8:31-32.

But, like these Jewish religious leaders, they thought they were free when in reality they were – ***BLIND TO THE BONDAGE OF SIN THEY WERE IN!***

But Jesus is not going to leave them there. He is going to cut right to the heart of the matter and expose the true bondage that they are in!

In other words – ***SIN ENSLAVES – JESUS LIBERATES!***

Listen to what Jesus said to them!

### VERSES 34-38

Jesus starts out with this truth, and He wants them to pay attention to this. Jesus used this phrase when He wanted to emphasize the absolute importance of what He was about to say.

What did He say to them?

He told them, “**Whoever commits sin is a slave to sin.**”

And the way that this is written, the verb tense that is being used, it is speaking of a habitual sin or continual action. This is the pattern of their life. And a person who is in habitual sin is a slave to sin!

Now let me say this. Sin, habitual sin does not happen all at once. It starts out by doing something and you think you are in control. Then you do it again, and you are losing control. And before you know it, you are a slave to this sin with no way out!

Think about someone who is addicted to drugs. Do you think, when they take that first shot, “***Hey, I am going to be a drug addict, in bondage to drugs!***” Of course not but before they know it, the thing they thought would bring them joy, has them in bondage!

That is what Jesus is speaking of.

Bruce put it like this, “***There is another kind of slavery than social or economic slavery. Sin is a slave-master, and it is possible even for people who think of themselves as free to be enslaved in sin.***”

I saw this as I worked in the Intensive Care Units at various hospitals. I have seen people in bondage to alcohol. They were killing themselves. Their skin was yellow due to liver failure. Their bellies were swollen with fluid, and they looked like they were pregnant. And not one of them every told me that they needed help, they were killing themselves with alcohol.

They were fine, they did not have a problem because they were – ***BLIND TO THE BONDAGE THEY WERE IN*** and thus, we see that – ***SIN ENSLAVES!***

That is how the wicked sex industry works. They know if they can get you to their web site of pornographic material, whether by chance, a mistake or by choice, they have caught you and it will be difficult to get out.

Think about men having sexual relations with minors. I am sure if you looked into it you would find that it started with pornographic websites, then pornographic children's websites and before long they are looking for children to have sexual relations with.

Ray Stedman put it like this. He wrote,

Such things never seem dangerous at first. They look very innocent because everybody does them, and we justify them in many ways.

They are popular, and furthermore, they are a lot of fun. I do not have to argue that with you. We know from our own experience the pleasure that wrongdoing brings.

Not only the obvious things such as drink and sex, but the pleasure of inward sins.

Did you ever feel the exquisite pleasure of telling somebody off when he was wrong?

Did you ever feel the delight of showing yourself to be better than someone else, or of indulging in a juicy bit of gossip that wrecked somebody's reputation?

Those too are “the pleasures of sin” (Hebrews 11:25). They form habits within us that finally become unbreakable, no matter how hard we try.

- [bit.ly/3hb0FN2](https://bit.ly/3hb0FN2)

Exactly.

What did Jesus say, “**Whoever commits sin is a slave to sin.**”

Jesus is 100% correct, and we should not doubt Him!

You see, whatever controls your life outside of Christ you are in bondage to, it is only in Jesus that we are free; we are bond slaves to Christ, freely surrendering our lives to Him!

Paul said in Galatians 4:7, “**Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**”

Now, as we read on what does Jesus mean when He says in John 8:35, “**And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.**”?

He is using the image of slavery to show that a slave does not remain in the house forever. He is a slave, and he has no rights to remain in the house. That was a warning because only a son remains in the house, he has permanent rights in the household!

Remember He is speaking to the Jewish religious leaders and the Jews in general. Because Jesus goes on to say in John 8:36, “**I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.**”

Yes, the Jews were descendants of Abraham but because of their rejection of the Messiah, of Jesus, they were like slaves and in danger of forfeiting the privileges of God that they received.

It was not that they could not become sons, but to do that they would have to let go of the false religious system they developed, it was not what God gave them, and come to the Savior, to Jesus who can set them free from the bondage of sin that they were in!

Remember the warning that Jesus gave them in Matthew 8:11-12, “**And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**”

It doesn't matter where you come from, what your heritage is, how famous you are, how insignificant according to the world's standards you are, if you don't come to Jesus, the Son of God, even if you are descendants of Abraham and even if you are not, if you don't come to Christ, you will be cast into outer darkness! You will be eternally separated from God!

How can I be so sure?

Well, we can spend years looking at the reasons why Jesus alone saves, but just listen to what Jesus said here in John 8:36, “**Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**”

Jesus alone can set us free from the bondage of sin and death that we are in. The Son has the power, the authority to do that for us. And we are free indeed! You can take that to the bank you might say!

Listen to what Paul said in Romans 8:1-4, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”**

Not that we don't sin when we come to Christ, but there is no condemnation because the debt of our sins was paid for by Christ. He set us free from the law of sin and death! We could not do this, but Christ could, and He did!

And what we see is that God sent His Son into this world to fill the righteous requirements of the Law and as He did, we were set free from the power of sin to live a life after the Spirit if we receive Jesus as Lord and Savior.

I like the way the nineteenth century Scottish evangelist, Robert Haldane, put it. He wrote, *“We see the Father assume the place of judge against His Son, in order to become the Father of those who were His enemies. The Father condemns the Son of His love, that He may absolve the children of wrath.”*

Wow, amazing grace – How sweet the sound – That saved a wretch like me!

The word **“fulfilled”** in verse 4 is an interesting word in the Greek. It is written in the passive voice which means we don't do it, we don't fulfill the work, but Christ has done it, it is in the past tense, it is ***FULFILLED!***

Again, praise God for that!

Please understand that freedom does not consist in the word “*freedom*,” or in words, but in relationship to Jesus Christ, through abiding in His Word, and being His disciple!

Warren Wiersbe sums it up like this for us. He wrote,

Jesus explained that the difference between spiritual freedom and bondage is a matter of whether one is a son or a slave.

The slave may live in the house, but he is not a part of the family; and he cannot be guaranteed a future. (Jesus may have had Isaac and Ishmael in mind here; see Gen. 21.)

“Whosoever keeps on practicing sin [literal translation] is the slave of sin.”

These religious leaders would not only die in their sins (John 8:21, 24), but they were right then living in bondage to sin!

How can slaves of sin be set free?

Only by the Son.

How does He do it?

Through the power of His Word.

Note the emphasis on the Word in John 8:38–47, and He had already told them, “The truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

They would not “make room” for His Word in their hearts.

- Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT*, p. 258

Look at what we have seen this morning.

We are – ***SET FREE IN CHRIST!***

We are free from the bondage of any false religious system and this relationship with Christ is not just about information, it is taking all that we know of God through His Word and living accordingly or abiding in Christ!

But how often we and even unbelievers are – ***BLIND TO BONDAGE!***

In other words, we lose sight of the sin we are in, and we push others away because we don't like what they are saying. And that causes us to continue on this path, not even knowing where we are going and that is a dangerous road to travel.

And lastly – ***SIN ENSLAVES – JESUS LIBERATES!***

Don't question Jesus on this one. He knows what He is talking about. ***IF THE SON MAKES YOU FREE, YOU SHALL BE FREE INDEED!***

In knowing that, may we live accordingly!

Let me close with this. We are told,

There is an old story that Abraham Lincoln went down to the slave block to buy a slave girl. As she looked at the white man bidding on her, she figured he was another white man going to buy her and then abuse her.

He won the bid, and as he was walking away with his property, he said, "Young lady, you are free."

She said, "What does that mean?"

"It means you are free."

"Does that mean," she said, "that I can say whatever I want to say?"

Lincoln said, "Yes, my dear, you can say whatever you want to say."

“Does that mean,” she said, “that I can be whatever I want to be?”

Lincoln said, “Yes, you can be whatever you want to be.”

“Does that mean I can go wherever I want to go?”

He said, “Yes, you can go wherever you want to go.”

The girl, with tears streaming down her face, said, “Then I will go with you.”

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Jesus has set us free; may we follow Him all the days of our life!