

Freedom In The Lord

Restoration of Faith Bible Study Notes

Friday 01 July 2022

What Does Freedom Really Mean?

1. When I use the word “**FREEDOM**”, what does that word mean to you?
What comes to mind when you think of freedom?

Dictionary Definition – (noun) the state of being free or at liberty rather than in confinement or under physical restraint; exemption from external control, interference, regulation, etc.; the power to determine action without restraint; political or national independence; personal liberty, as opposed to bondage or slavery; exemption from the presence of anything specified (usually followed by from): i.e. freedom from fear.

Jesus Background Context

So just like last week’s study on rest, there is a physical and a spiritual aspect to the word that I would like to study out this week. Also there is an OT concept and a NT concept on Freedom as well. Now from the definition, we all understand the basic OT physical concept of freedom from slavery for the Israelites coming out of captivity in Egypt into the Promised Land. The Passover is a study on the OT spiritual concept of freedom from that same event. I will get back to this idea later on in the study with an example on spiritual Freedom in Passover. Since we got a little bogged down in the OT parts last week I thought I would just head straight to the NT verses first in this study and then come back around to the OT later.

As a background, in John chapter 7, Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths (Festival of Tabernacles, Sukkot, reference: Leviticus 23:33-43). This is a 1 week long Jewish fall festival which usually falls in our month of September-October, in which the Israelites live in tents or booths as a remembrance that the people lived in tents or booths when they came out of Egypt and lived in the desert. It is a remembrance of freedom or deliverance for the people.

In Jesus' time, during the weeklong festival, one of the things the priest in the temple would do is take water from the pool of Siloam and pour it on the altar as a sacrifice. Then on the last day of the festival, the priest would march around the altar holding the water as a sign that the Messiah would come to provide water as was prophesied (Reference: Joel 3:18). This is where Jesus makes the famous statement in **John 7:37-39**

37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Additionally each night of the weeklong festival giant oil lamps were lit in the Temple Court of the Women. It is against this backdrop where Jesus forgives the woman caught in adultery and makes the famous statement in **John 8:12**

12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

Jesus' Statement on Freedom

So the overarching argument between Jesus and the Jews in these chapters that is going on is whether or not He is the Jewish Messiah or not. It is also something we need to decide, whether or not He is God and worthy to be our Lord. Now we have the contextual background that leads up to Jesus' statement of what freedom is. So now during the weeklong camping trip that celebrates freedom we now get to **John 8:31-32**

John 8:31-32 (NASB) – *31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."*

(NIV) To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

2. What are some things that prevent Christians from following Jesus' teaching and growing as His disciples? What excuses do non-believers give to avoid following Jesus' teaching?

Freedom Targets

A discussion on the nature of freedom might lead to different interpretations for different people. For some, an expression of freedom implies unrestrained pursuit of personal desires. For others an expression of freedom may mean nothing more than the ability to refuse to submit to anyone or an attitude of defiance. Everyone Christians and non-Christians has excuses that they use to avoid following Jesus' teaching. However, these types of interpretations do not address the freedom that Jesus implied. The freedom to which Jesus alluded to was an eternal freedom, not human expectations of earthly freedom.

3. Freedom always has a target... i.e. Freedom from something or freedom to do something. What is the target of this freedom that Jesus refers to in verse 32?

Read **John 8: 33-36**. So according to the following verse 34 Jesus says *"Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."* So the target of freedom that Jesus is referring to is freedom from sin. The Jewish people Jesus was talking to did not understand. Their response starting verse 33 indicates that they believed that they were already free. You see in their minds, their Israelite ancestors had been slaves in Egypt for 430 years, and then they were miraculously delivered from that slavery. That was a good conversation to have at a camping trip that celebrates that event. Then, more recently (486 years prior) in their history their ancestors had been slaves again in Assyria and Babylon for 70 years, and then they were miraculously delivered from that slavery as well. In Jesus' time they were occupied by Rome, but they were at least granted some freedom of worship and while they might or might not have been Roman citizens, they were not slaves either.

Verse 36 to me is the ultimate statement of this chapter *"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."* Jesus is the way the truth and the life and nobody can get to the Father except through Him. Only Jesus the Son of God is the source of eternal life who can set us free from sin. *All have sinned and fallen short of the*

glory of God. The wages of sin is ... Death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Refs: John 14:6, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23)

4. How does the Son's freedom differ from worldly ideas of freedom?

From Glory to Glory

2 Corinthians 3:15-18

15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; 16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (freedom NIV). 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Remember in Genesis, we as humans are made in God's image and likeness. It is the Holy Spirit that transforms us from glory to glory. Unbelievers are veiled or clouded in their thinking (Ref: 2 Corinthians 4:4) and do not seek God. So it is up to us the believers in Christ to seek Him more and allow the Spirit to transform our lives.

5. Have you ever felt freedom in the presence of God? What makes you feel that way?

Good News God Sent His Son Jesus

Romans 8:1-4 *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

6. What's one thing you can do to begin spending time in God's presence to experience His freedom?

(Refs: Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18-21, Galatians 5:1)

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Jesus Background Context

Feast of Booths (Festival of Tabernacles, Sukkot, reference: Leviticus 23:33-43). Verses that show strong statements that Jesus makes during the festival:

John 7:37-39 & John 8:12

Jesus' Statement on Freedom

John 8:31-32

2. What are some things that prevent Christians from following Jesus' teaching and growing as His disciples? What excuses do non-believers give to avoid following Jesus' teaching?

Freedom Targets

3. Freedom always has a target... i.e. Freedom from something or freedom to do something. What is the target of this freedom that Jesus refers to in verse 32?

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2 Corinthians 3:15-18, 2 Corinthians 4:4

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