

True Freedom John 8:31-36

INTRODUCTION

Please turn in your Bible to **John 8:31-36**. As Americans, we value freedom. Our nation was founded on the principle of *“liberty and justice for all.”* We can thank the Lord that we have the freedom to meet together and to worship Him. The **Fourth of July** is a day of patriotic songs and warm sentiment celebrating the freedoms that we enjoy. Freedom is a strange thing. When you don’t have it, you desperately want it. **When you do have it, you take it for granted.** So, once a year it is good to think about how we got to where we are today. It is good to consider how different things would be if the Revolutionary War had never been fought. As good as it is to celebrate these blessings, we gather this morning not to adore America; we have come here to adore and celebrate the Lord. **Our celebration (our freedom in Christ) transcends nations and political rhetoric.**

Did you know that it is possible to be an American, and still not be free? Did you know that it is possible for a person to enjoy all the rights guaranteed to the citizens of this nation and for that person to still not be free? **Did you know that many Americans are free socially, but bound spiritually?** We should recognize that the Bible teaches us of a freedom that far transcends anything that has been obtained through the signing of a political declaration or from the winning of military victories. **In fact, I would contend that it is a more significant freedom than the one we celebrate in our nation this weekend.** This is a message we need to affirm on weekends like this one. Most Americans would respond like the Jews. Any hint that they are not already free would be met with scoffing and disdain. But as Jesus said to His countryman, so we say to ours, *“if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”* These are easy words to say...but what do they mean?

I. What are we set free _____

Before we can celebrate being free, we need to understand what we were freed from. The Colonists back in the times of the Revolutionary War certainly knew what they wanted freedom from. They wanted to be free from state religion, taxation without representation, and being controlled by a distant land. These were some of the things they wanted to be free from. As Christians it is valuable for us to note what we have been freed from.

We are set free from _____

A. We are set free from sin’s _____:

When we place our trust in Jesus Christ we are receiving what He has done for us. The Bible tells us that in Jesus *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”* (2 Cor. 5:21) In simple terms: Jesus was our substitute. He was punished for our crimes. An innocent man took our place. He gave Himself so we could go free. He paid our debt. He suffered our punishment. When we become a citizen of the United States of America, we become the beneficiary of the work done by others. We are granted freedom that someone else worked for. In the same way, when we pledge our allegiance to Jesus Christ (and mean it) we are free from the judgment of sin.

B. We are set free from sin's _____:

Now that the grace of God has been set upon us as a permanent seal (2 Cor. 1:20–22), we are being made new. We are being set free from the power of sin by the power of the Spirit. God's grace is restoring to us a will that wants what He wants. Before we were justified, our broken wills were utterly subject to the power of sin. We chose sin at every turn. Even when we made choices that appeared good from an external standpoint, because we had no higher internal purpose than to glorify self these choices were ultimately sinful as well. Now, the power of sin is broken. We have been given the deposit of the Holy Spirit. Though we once chose only to sin, now we have the power (and the growing desire) to choose righteousness. We who were once slaves to sin's power are now free to serve God. We don't always use our freedom. We still sin, but over time we learn increasingly to choose holiness. Our entire lives from that handwritten date in our Bibles onward are devoted to "*working out our salvation*" (Phil. 2:12–13) as we learn to choose righteousness instead of sin, to walk in obedience to God's commands. *Our sanctification is ongoing. It is a slow-moving growth in holiness. We are being saved from sin's power.*

Now...practically this means several things:

- ***we must remind ourselves that we are free***

The old way has no real power over us. Destructive habits can be overcome!

- ***we should immerse ourselves in the Word of God.***

One of the best ways to overcome something negative is to replace it with something positive. We must learn the way of God and see its superiority to the old ways in which we used to live.

- ***we should confess sin when it gains victory in our lives and strive to live as people freed by grace.***

** We are also set free from _____.

** We are set free from our _____.

C. We are promised to be set free from sin's

_____:

- ***Be*** _____ of your justification.
- ***Be*** _____ with your sanctification.
- ***Be*** _____ for your glorification.

II. What we are set free _____

A. We are set free to live in _____
with God and _____ Him today and forever

B. We are free to draw on His _____
and experience His _____

Charles Spurgeon writes of the many benefits of the freedom that God provides in **Christ**: *"you shall be free to call yourself God's child, you shall be free to say, 'Abba, Father,' without rebuke, you shall be free to claim the protection of that Father's house, and the provision of his bounty; you shall be free to come to his knees with all your trials and tell him all your griefs; you shall be free to plead his promises and to receive the fulfillment of them too; you shall be free to sit at his table, not as a servant is permitted sometimes to sit down when the feast is over to eat leftovers, but you shall sit there as a well-beloved son, to eat the fatted calf while your Father with you, eats, drinks, and is merry; free to share in all those benefits which Christ has given to his beloved; and when you die, you shall be free to enter into the rest which remains for the people of God; free to enter the New Jerusalem which is above; free to her streets of joy; free to her great banquet which lasts forever; free to the heart of God, to the throne of Christ, and to the blessedness of eternity."* [Metropolitan Pulpit vol. 10]

CONCLUSION

I hope you agree that although the freedom we celebrate as citizens of this land is wonderful, it is nothing compared to the all-encompassing freedom that we have received in Christ. This morning we have chosen to dwell on this greater freedom.

As we have done so we have been led to some inevitable questions.

The first is this: *Have you entered into the freedom that is offered by God through Christ?*

But there is a **second question**. This one is for those who are walking in freedom. *Brothers and sisters, when was the last time you celebrated what God has done for you?* How long has it been since you wept for joy at the glory of what you have been given in Christ?

How long has it been since you kicked back and laughed or smiled at the wonder that God loves you? **While** everyone is celebrating their national freedom step back in the depth of your soul and give a cheer to the Lord of heaven. **When** you have your cookout, in addition to being grateful for the food on the grill, give thanks for the Bread of Life. **When** you place your hand over your heart in honor of our flag and country, remind yourself of your greater allegiance to the King of King and Lord of Lords.