

“The Word of Freedom”—John 8:34-36

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “The Word of Freedom”, is John 8:34-36 → *Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

A church membership committee was examining a candidate for membership in their congregation. One of the questions asked the candidate was: “What part of the Bible do you like best?”

He responded, “I like the New Testament best.”

“What book in the New Testament?”

“The Book of Parables, sir,” responded the candidate.

“Would you kindly relate one of those parables to this committee?”

So the uncertain candidate bluffed his way through as follows: “Once upon a time a man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves; and the thorns grew up and choked that man. And he went on and met the Queen of Sheba, and she gave that man a thousand talents of gold

and silver and a hundred changes of clothing. And he got in his chariot and drove furiously. And when he was driving along under a big tree, his hair got caught in a limb and left him hanging there. And he hung there for many days and many nights, and the ravens brought him food to eat and water to drink. And one night while he was hanging there asleep, his wife, Delilah, came along and cut off his hair and he dropped and fell on stony ground; and it began to rain, and it rained forty days and forty nights. And he hid himself in a cave. And he went out and met a man that said, 'Come and take supper with me.' But he said, 'I cannot come, for I have married a wife.' And the man went out into the highways and byways and compelled him to come in. He went on and came to Jerusalem and he saw Queen Jezebel sitting high up in a window, and when she saw him she laughed, and he said, 'Throw her down.' He said, 'Throw her down out of there again.' And they threw her down seventy times seven, and of the fragments they picked up twelve baskets full. Now, at the resurrection whose wife will she be?"

There was no one on the committee who felt qualified to question the candidate further, for each committee member had a deep suspicion that his own organized Bible knowledge was sketchy—just like that of the candidate. The applicant was voted into church membership.

As ridiculous as such a compilation of Scripture details may be, I wonder

how well Christians can discuss or communicate the various accounts and teachings of the Scriptures from memory, while keeping them in their proper context and perspective. I've heard many people quote "the good Book" in all kinds of ways . . . or shall I say paraphrase? Indeed, the LORD has given us much information in His revelation concerning His work in our lives! It's no wonder that it can become rather mixed up and muddled together as we strive to process it all!

We are told in our text that the revelation of God's Word was given to us to free us up because, as God's truth, and it will always point us to His Son, Jesus Christ. In verse 34 of our text Jesus tells us why we need the word of freedom in our lives: *Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.*

This is actually a very difficult concept for people to grasp in our culture, even though they experience it every single day. Sin has been discredited and replaced with a gamut of behaviors attributed to addictions, mental illnesses, as well as abuse and victimization on every relationship level. In this way you need only admit the reason why you act like you do or struggle so much, so that you can accept who really is responsible for your behavior. But to admit that **you** are responsible for behaving sinfully as sin breeds sin in you life—never! Nonetheless, you continue to struggle with feeling enslaved to sin with a journey of coping behaviors in a effort to find some peace in your soul. You

need God's Word of freedom!

This slavery is so intense that it hinders people from seeing the only One Who has dealt with sin once and for all—Jesus—and trusting only in His Person & Work for forgiveness. Even though the people with whom Jesus was dealing in our text recognized they were sinners, they struggled with this slavery to sin in a different way. They did not think they needed forgiveness of sins **on God's terms**. Jesus was talking about how people need forgiveness of their sins through faith in Him alone. Their statement in John 8:33 reflects their understanding of forgiveness accompanying their nationality as "God's people." *They answered Him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"*

It was in the midst of such enslavement to sin that Martin Luther read these words from Romans 3:22-23 → *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God **through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe**. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus!*** This is God's word of freedom!

God declares you righteous, forgiven, holy in His sight solely by faith in the

Son, Jesus Christ! You are forgiven completely **on God's terms**, not on your terms or through your own efforts. God's Word not only shows you your slavery to sin but shows you your freedom from sin through faith in Christ alone!

This was Jesus' point in contrasting slavery to sonship in the family relationship in verse 35 of our text: *The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.* You are brought from being enslaved to sin into sonship in God's family by baptism. Galatians 3:26-27,29 says: *In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ . . . And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

You continue in this relationship of sonship everyday as you come to God's word of freedom and the Holy Spirit causes you to *grow in the **grace** and knowledge of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* (cf. 2 Peter 3:18) You continue in that relationship of sonship as you come to God's word of freedom in worship regularly with the family of God to dispense and receive the forgiveness of your sins and the empowering of the Holy Spirit to remain in God's house *forever* as His children! *So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed!* (cf. verse 36)

The freeing power of God's Word, through which the Holy Spirit connects

us to righteousness through faith in Jesus, goes with us into our everyday lives, relationships and struggles with sin. Not only does it give us the ability to recognize, admit and confess our sins, it also frees us up to a new life of service. We have been freed from slavery to serve? Sounds strange, doesn't it? How can one be free if he is still serving? Isn't freedom getting to do whatever you want in life?

You take the righteousness of Jesus into your daily vocations with a new perspective that desires Christ to be served in all our efforts. This does not necessarily have to do with special, amazing feats of good works but simply desiring to *let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts . . . and be thankful.* (cf. Colossians 3:15) It's simply speaking in ways which strive to build others up and gives *grace to those who hear.* (cf. Ephesians 4:29) It is bearing *one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ.* (cf. Galatians 6:2) *Just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.* (cf. Romans 6:19) **And all because you have been completely forgiven and declared righteous by grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ alone, based on God's word of freedom alone! Amen.**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen