

Message #11 in our Precept Summer Series “Free To Be All HE Wants Me To Be!” John 8: 31-38

Introduction: IL- “I Have A Dream” speech, August 28, 1963 *“Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty we’re free at last!”* [Martin Luther King Jr.] That was a March on Washington for jobs and economic rights. Still some major issues in race relations, but our precept today brings truth to bear from a Biblical perspective about the joy of freedom in Christ!

God’s truth sets us free in two distinct ways that we can experience through the Word:

Freedom FROM- John 8: 31, 32 Most people in our world are not free spiritually!

Sin- the greatest liberty is freedom from sin’s power over us! That bondage to sin takes mankind all the way back to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, but we today cannot put the blame on the two of them because *WE* sin too- we were born in sin and demonstrated it from the time we were very young! Romans 3: 23 reminds us- “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God! Romans 8: 2 tells us- “For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death. So, in place of remaining in bondage to sin we can know sweet peace through freedom in Christ and through the indwelling Holy Spirit. The word translated “slave” or “bondslave” is found 124 times in the New Testament and that demonstrates how all-pervasive sin is in dominating our lives before we become true believers. Man’s greatest sin is rejection of the love of God and His gift of eternal life through grace revealed at Calvary! There are three words in the original Greek that describe sin: missing the mark, stepping over the line and cherishing sinful things in my heart (Psalm 66; 18). Because of the Cross, sin no longer wields the power it once had in the life of a Christian. Romans 6: 14 says, “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.”

Satan- Jesus truthfully confronted the Jews that day who were so proud of their connection to Abraham genetically. He told them that their real “father” was the Devil. He described the Devil as a “murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” In the Garden of Eden, according to Genesis 3: 1, in the likeness of a snake, he asked Eve- “Did God ACTUALLY say ‘you shall not eat of any tree the Garden?’” And the liar sought to portray GOD as the liar! Those living in sin and under the control of Satan are quite used to hearing his lies- such as, “It’s your life- you can live it any way you like.” “Sin isn’t as bad as it used to be.” “God made you the way you are, so don’t worry about identifying as anything you want to be.” Yes, we live in a sin-sick world, and Satan is MORE than happy to see evil in action because it makes him feel like HE is in charge, not God! **IL-** Hal Lindsey wrote a best seller back in 1972 titled, “Satan Is Alive and Well on Planet Earth.” It sure seems like that title is more accurate 50 years later! Satan, through his demon army, continues to wage war on the Church in order, I believe, to mock God. Satan’s twisted thinking enjoys it much when someone walks away from the precepts of truth in God’s Word. It happened in Jesus’ day too- John 6: 66- “After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.” Don’t be one of those or

spiritual freedom will elude you until you turn around and come to the Cross! Satan is just fine with someone intellectually agreeing with the claims of Christ as long as faith doesn't come into play and Jesus becomes our Lord and Master! The Devil will do all he can to keep us self-focused like those Jews who said of themselves in John 8: 33...

Self-focus- "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone." Oh really? Sin and Satan had been hard at work to convince them that they were right up there with the great Abraham- a giant of the faith. And because those Jews bought hook, line and sinker into that proud self-focus, they couldn't imagine being slaves to anyone, right while they discuss all of this standing on the streets as Roman soldiers patrol the city that at that time was under Caesar's control! Their previous history was filled with nation after nation dominating and humiliating the Jews people, whether we are talking about Egypt or Babylon. Sin and self go hand in hand until we recognize that fact and turn to Jesus and become HIS bondsman. One meaning of "slave" in the Greek language means, "one who belongs to another". Do YOU belong to Christ? Have you focused on HIM in the Word of God? Have you given your life to Him by faith in what He did for YOU as He hung on that cross of shame and paid the penalty for your sins and those of the whole world? If you have become a devoted follower of Jesus because of His grace, you can constantly thank Him for bringing you into precious freedom- yes-

Freedom TO- **John 8: 35, 36** If the Son sets you free you shall be free indeed!"

Praise- Free to praise Him for all He has done for you, especially in reference to those days/weeks/months/years of bondage to sin, Satan and self. Paul writes in Romans 6: 22- "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end- eternal life!" What a contrast to enslavement by sin! Instead of being on a "me mission" to prop myself up as a great person, I can know God's purpose for me is holiness- to be set apart to God for holy purposes. And I can and should praise Him for even wanting to use ME!! And I can praise Him that He saw fit to reach into this sin-filled world and bombard it with grace and mercy, forgiving my sin- past, present and future. What an amazing God we worship and serve. And my new freedom in Christ becomes the means by which I serve Him with my best in every way- especially my walk before others- the family of God and the society of needy unbelievers. I now want to be all that He wants me to be so that HE gets the glory.

Practice- Jesus told the Jews in John 8: 34- "Truly, truly I say to you- every one who practices sin is a slave to sin!" I look forward to opening my Bible every day to hear from God and get to know Him better. I need to read about this lost world and its desperate need- America and every other country! I can encourage my brothers and sisters in Christ to be in the Word daily too and we can and should pray for each other- even about our faults and failures. James 5: 16 tells us- "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power AS IT IS WORKING!" I need to practice holy living through the Holy Spirit as I read and apply the truths found in my Holy Bible, and I need to pray for myself and other believers that we will be and do all that God

wants! This kind of spiritual practice keeps me on the right path and God can and will use me. No longer in bondage to sin, now 1 John 3: 9 is true- "No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in Him (has taken residence in him) and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God!" Now I want to bless my fellow bond-slaves by proclaiming truth to them after I remind them and me what God has done for us! I also want to

Proclaim- tell those around me who do not know this freedom (yet!) how they can be set free to be what God wants them to be! A wonderful description of this holy activity is found in Ephesians 4: 15- "Rather, speaking the truth in love we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the Head, into Christ." As I grow up spiritually I want more and more of those around me, outside of Christ, outside of the family of God- the Church- to come to faith in Jesus Christ. I know from God's Word that Jesus willingly took my sins and theirs upon Himself and gave His life, His last breath while on that cross. He rose from the dead to prove He is God in the flesh, He ascended back to the Father and is now seated on the throne of God. He offers new life, a transformed life, to all who recognize their lost condition and will own up to it, while at the same time thank Him for taking all their sins upon Himself and offering the gift of eternal life- a gift that simply needs to be received by faith! Once we do that, we are no longer "cherishing or loving sin dearly"- rather we lovingly, thankfully cherish the Lord Jesus and WILL do so for all eternity!

Closing Song: "Christ in Me"