

Run Free

Freedom

Galatians 5:1 (NIV)

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Braveheart (Picture) Mel Gibson plays William Wallace, the Scottish man that's leading the charge against English tyranny. King Edward of England was trying to take over Scotland. Wallace wasn't having it. "We will be free men and stand in freedom." He rallies farmers and village people to fight the English army. When they see the army, they get scared because it's huge.

Wallace rides out on his horse and shouts:

"You came here as free men to fight, freemen you are! But what will you do without your freedom?"

"They may take our lives, but they will never take our freedom!"

Freedom isn't free.

- It's going to take a fight because freedom isn't free.
- Freedom is messy and it's costly.
- Martin Luther King Jr...cost him his life. The cost our nation paid to be free in 1776 (no bbq that day) Lives sacrificed to defend and preserve our freedom.
- JESUS, the greatest freedom fighter of all time, paid the ultimate price so that we could walk as free people!
- But we have a real enemy that wants to tie us up, keep us bound, enslaved to habits, living tied to the past, imprisoned by shame, fear, and unforgiveness.
- If you want to live in freedom, you must learn to fight to stand in it. Are you ready to fight? If not, you'll be ready by the end of this message.

Your freedom is worth fighting for!

John 8:36

If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

- What's the difference between being free and free indeed?
- If prisoners escape from prison, they got out, but they aren't free. They are looking over their shoulders, wondering when their freedom will end, and when will they get caught.
- Jesus wants you FREE INDEED! Not looking over your shoulder wondering when your yesterday will catch up with your today.
- It's time for some of us to stop living like a runaway or an escaped convict wondering how long it will last. When will they come and take you back?

- We are not just talking about a moment of freedom...this is a life of freedom. God wants us to Run in Freedom!

(Context: Jesus and the disciples are going to help this man on the other side of the Sea of Galilee and there's a storm.)

Mark 5:1-13 (NLT)

5 So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes.^[a] ² When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil^[b] spirit came out from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. ⁴ Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones. ⁶ When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him. ⁷ With a shriek, he screamed, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don’t torture me!” ⁸ For Jesus had already said to the spirit, “Come out of the man, you evil spirit.” ⁹ Then Jesus demanded, “What is your name?” And he replied, “My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man.” ¹⁰ Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place. ¹¹ There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. ¹² “Send us into those pigs,” the spirits begged. “Let us enter them.” ¹³ So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

- This man was living among the tombs, dead things. There are some of us living among dead things. Things we think will give us life, fulfill us, feel good, cool/fun, but they only lead to death.
- Maybe you were told if you chase after popularity, success, and followers that it would be enough. Maybe it's an escape from pain, reality, and purpose as an attempt to be whole.
- The enemy will trick you into living among dead things to find living things.
- Sin always looks like freedom, but it takes you farther than you want to go, keeps you longer than you want to stay, and costs you more than you want to pay.
- Those things will never satisfy the soul. There's only one who gives life and freedom.
- You might not be crying out in despair on the outside like this man, but you know how he feels. You know what it feels like to search for life among the dead.
- But if you will run out of the tombs and cry out to Jesus you will experience freedom!

⁶ When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him.

Jesus doesn't avoid dead places.

⁷ With a shriek, he screamed, "Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"

- Jesus, Son of the Most High God is the highest title for Jesus in the entire book of Mark and it's proclaimed by a bunch of demons. They know who He is! They were there when Satan was cast out of Heaven.
- Demons are real. Over 80 times in the Bible, and 61 times in the Gospels. Jesus teaches about them, talks to them, and rebukes them. (Disembodied spirits looking for a body. Cats)

3 Perspectives:

- o "That's not real." Ignoring it doesn't make it go away. Avoidance is dangerous when it's something Jesus has given you authority over. We can biblically confront.
- o "Everything is a demon" No it's not. We don't have to be afraid because the greater ONE lives in us. Much of what we deal with is us.
- o "Saved and dangerous" When you believe in Jesus, you become a threat to Satan. Why? Because the same Spirit that beat death, hell, and the grave lives in you. (predictable resistance)

We must know our enemy and live guarded and aware in faith, not fear.

1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

⁸ Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

Ephesians 6:11-13 (NLT)

¹¹ Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹² For we^[a] are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

- The enemy is real but it's not your boss, the person who betrayed you, or the family member that bothers you.
- His schemes (plans) are in John 10:10 ONLY Kill, steal, and destroy. He doesn't play games. He wants your soul. He wants to control your thoughts to stop the expansion of God's Kingdom.
- If you knew there was a physical threat, you would be ready. Lock your doors, walk with caution. But many Christians live as if there's nothing to protect or guard. You wouldn't leave your house with the garage door, front door, or windows open.
- Too many of us are leaving the doors to our house open! "The keys are under the mat come take what you want."

Object Lesson: Move the Line

Create a line on the floor with tape. Everything on one side of the line is sin and the other side is not. What most of us do when facing situations (maybe it's unclear or we don't know a specific verse) is get as close to the line as we can without stepping over it. It's not quite a sin, but it's pretty stinking close. A business deal that is questionable but not illegal. Habits we settle for that "aren't as bad as before." God delivers from things but then we get just close enough. Dating relationships- how far is too far? That's too close to the line. Make another line farther away from the "sin" line so that if you cross that line, you are still far away from crossing into sin.

1 Thessalonians 5:21-23 (Amplified)

²¹ But test all things carefully [so you can recognize what is good]. Hold firmly to that which is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil [withdraw and keep away from it]. ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you through and through [that is, separate you from profane and vulgar things, make you pure and whole and undamaged—consecrated to Him—set apart for His purpose]; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete and [be found] blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What line do you need to move today?

- What we watch, listen to, or do for entertainment...it's opening ourselves up to spirits that are not the Spirit of Christ. Horoscopes, psychics, and sorcery are demonic. (Deut. 18:11) While they may not possess you, they can oppress you.

If we believe there's nothing wrong, we'll never run free.

- Don't let your denial delay your deliverance
- Stay yielded to the truth so that you stand in freedom. (*And do not give the devil an opportunity Ephesians 4:27*)

Verses 10-13

¹⁰ Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place.

¹¹ There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. ¹² "Send us into those pigs," the spirits begged. "Let us enter them." ¹³ So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

- This wasn't about the man. It was about the territory. The demons were after that territory. "Don't send us out of this area."
- Spirits of darkness establish their authority in areas or regions. We see this with generational strongholds.
- But when we run to Jesus with it and ask for His help, He sends every spirit of darkness running.

What started before you can stop with you when you cry out to Jesus!

Verses 14-15

¹⁴The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. ¹⁵A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid.

- They weren't afraid when the man was crazy, but now they are.
- You and I would be freaking out if we drive by a cemetery and a crazy man jumped on our car but not these people. They had become comfortable with crazy.
- Don't get comfortable with crazy! They lived so long with what was wrong that they thought what was wrong was right. And now that it was right, they thought it was wrong. (Satan is the author of confusion)
- This is our society today. People say crazy, do crazy, post crazy, protest crazy. "Well, good for them." No! As the people of God, we can't get comfortable with the crazy!
- We get way too familiar with what should be foreign!
- I wonder what we have grown accustomed to that God says that's not what I want for your life? What have we put up with for so long that we think it's normal?

Run Free!

James 4:7 (Message)

So let God work his will in you. Yell a loud no to the Devil and watch him make himself scarce. Say a quiet yes to God and he'll be there in no time. Quit dabbling in sin. Purify your inner life. Quit playing the field. Hit bottom, and cry your eyes out. The fun and games are over. Get serious, really serious. Get down on your knees before the Master; it's the only way you'll get on your feet.

1. Run to Jesus

- The 1000's of demons that were in this man couldn't stop him from running to Jesus that day! You are here because you believe this.
- Daily Run to the Word- John 1:1 The Word became flesh. Every time you run to the Word, you run to Jesus.
- *Psalm 119:45 "I have gained perfect freedom by following your teachings."* Spirit, Soul, Body

2. Run from Evil

- Strongholds and influences that keep coming back and seem to have power or influence in your life.
- If Jesus can help this man, he can help us!
- Have you gotten comfortable with crazy?