

Freedom

LifeLock

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.

Story: While Emma was on mission this summer, she kept talking about getting sushi when she returned home. She took us to The Revolving Sushi Factory the other day! It's impressive. A robot delivers your drinks and sushi comes on a conveyor belt and train. They just keep bringing it. The plates stack up high. We were stuffed and it got even better for Emma because her dad paid.

- Our Heavenly Father is so generous with us. He has an endless supply of freedom. He's like a revolving freedom factory. We don't have to earn it or pay for it. He's paid the bill. Freedom is on Him; we just need to access and enjoy it.

Romans 6 (Message)

*But offer yourselves to the ways of God and the **freedom** never quits. All your lives you've let sin tell you what to do. But thank God you've started listening to a new master, one whose commands set you free to live openly in his **freedom!***

It's through personal relationship with Christ and His Church that we find freedom and learn to stand in it firmly.

Context of Church of Galatia

- Forgotten who they were, lost their identity.
- Paul described them as bewitched, a spell or hex.
- They were so sure and now they are not.
- His admonishment: "How dare you let something come in and steal your identity."
- Their view of God became religious instead of relational.

Our Heavenly Father:

- God is referred to as Father in the Bible 265 times.
- He is a present and protective Father. He's the ultimate helicopter dad but not in a weird way.
- There's no place too far that He can't come after us or get to us.
- Our feelings about our Heavenly Father are not always factual. (We put our feelings about an earthly father on God)
 - Feelings are real but not always facts.
 - You may feel you messed up so bad that God has turned His back on you, but His Word paints a picture of a Father with open arms waiting to embrace you.

- Sometimes you have been praying so long for something and think your Father is absent. Your God will never leave you nor forsake you. He's working and moving!
- Our prayer is that you gain a deeper revelation of how far, how wide, how deep the love of your Father really is.

What does this have to do with freedom??

When you know whose we are, we can know who you are.

- Our identity isn't up for grabs. We get it from our Creator and to mess with it means you mess with Him. Identity isn't a choice. It's decided by our Heavenly Father. I can then choose to accept who he says I am or reject who he says I am.
- When we choose not to accept it, it's what is called an Identity Crisis.
- If we never embrace our identity and all we can access as His children, we will never walk in the free life He has for us.
- John 10:10 Satan comes to STEAL...your enemy is an identity thief. He knows if he can rob your identity, he can steal your destiny.
- We've got to get this settled once and for all. If we don't, we can live our whole lives in an identity crisis. We will settle for a lesser label that culture puts on us or that we put on ourselves.

Jesus LifeLocks Identity

Luke 19:1-9 (NLT)

19 Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. 2 There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. 3 He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way. 5 When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today." 6 Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. 7 But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

- His title was a tax collector, and his label was a notorious sinner. It couldn't even be spoken, it had to be grumbled.
- He earned it. He was hired by the Roman Empire to tax his own people. The Jews hated the Romans because of their oppression and high taxation. It was common knowledge that the Jewish tax collectors would keep money to themselves and there was no law to protect the people.
- Zacch was a traitor and was getting rich off his own people. He was an outsider and thief until one day Jesus called him to come close. Close enough to hear His voice and look into His eyes...

⁸ *Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"*

- Nobody told him to give back the money, but nobody had to. When He got close to Jesus, things started changing. When you get close to Jesus, things begin changing.
Behavior follows belief.

⁹ *Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham."*

- Jesus had a new label for Zacchaeus. While the crowd called him a "sinner" Jesus called him a "son."
- He stepped down from the tree into a new identity, free to live a life of generosity.

Identity can't be discovered at a distance.

- Sometimes we look at freedom from the distance of the tree, It's "over there" but not in here (heart). *Sitting at Revolving Sushi Factory watching it just go by w/o accessing it.*
- Sometimes we don't want to come down from the tree because it means we have to change.
- So many are trying hard to find freedom from the tree. Stop trying and get close. Freedom is walking right by.

We become what we behold.

- Zacchaeus let go of the tree that day to stand before the Lord.
- In the meantime (while all this stuff was happening around him) closeness with Jesus led to freedom.

Ex. *We see characteristics and traits in Emma and Timothy because of the time we spend together. It's a natural flow from closeness.*

- It's the same with Jesus. He didn't come just to get you to stop doing bad stuff. He wants to lead us into the free life that comes through a close, personal relationship with Him.
- You look like Him because He's who you are looking at.

John 1:12 (Message)

But whoever did want him, who believed he was who he claimed and would do what he said, He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves.

- Notice the connection between wanting and knowing Him with being your true self.

- “Finding your center” “On the journey of self-discovery” This way of thinking leads to an identity crisis. Find Him, Find You!

Live Intentionally Close to Jesus: ***We don’t earn closeness with Jesus, but we do choose it.***

- Prayer (Open dialogue with Jesus)
- Word (The written Word reveals the Living Word)
- Local Church (Closest friends are close to Jesus)

Mark 5:24-34 (NLT)

²⁴ Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him. ²⁵ A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse.

- This woman’s issue had become her identity. It impacted every area of her life. Kept her from family and the future that she wanted. (She was considered unclean, and separated from society)
- Have you ever had an issue so big that it impacted every area of your life? It swallowed up your identity. You began to identify with your issue. (Divorce, Abuse, Addiction, Cultural Label, Rejection, Death)
- You thought time would heal but like this woman, you learned that time is NOT a healer but there is ONE who is a Healer!
- She knew this day; Jesus was coming close...

²⁷ She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe. ²⁸ For she thought to herself, “If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed.” ²⁹ Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition. ³⁰ Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my robe?” ³¹ His disciples said to him, “Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, ‘Who touched me?’” ³² But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came, and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done. ³⁴ And he said to her, “Daughter...

- “Daughter” this issue had kept her from ever having a family. Jesus was telling her that she belonged to His family, she was no longer an outsider.
- “You are not your issue, you are not a rejected outcast, and because you belong to me, you have access to my healing, power, and freedom. Most of all, you have access to me!”
- Jesus didn’t want to move on without connecting with her. He wanted her to know He knew her and saw her. The healing wasn’t the point, being close to her was the point.
- Jesus wanted the relationship to outlast the moment!

34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over."

When we embrace our identity, we step out of our history and into our destiny.

- Your history might be rejection, but your destiny is acceptance.
- Your history might be brokenness, but your destiny is wholeness.
- Your history might be a mess, but your destiny is masterpiece.
- Your history might be bound, but your destiny is freedom!

Galatians 4:6-7 (TPT)

6 And so that we would know that we are his true children, God released the Spirit of Sonship into our hearts—moving us to cry out intimately, "My Father! My true Father!" 7 Now we're no longer living like slaves under the law, but we enjoy being God's very own sons and daughters! And because we're his, we can access everything our Father has—for we are heirs because of what God has done!

- Access: You don't have to earn it or strive for it. You just access the freedom He has for you through a relationship.
- As sons and daughters, freedom is our inheritance. As heirs, you have authority over your identity, to protect and preserve it, where it can never be stolen from you again.

Live It: *LifeLock Your Identity Using the "I Am" declaration you have on your seats. Those watching online can access using the link. Use it every day this month. We believe it will help you draw close to Jesus and secure your identity in Him.*