



MARCH 1, 2026 | Dr. Jimmy Stewart

Jesus Changes Everything **Bondage → Freedom**

Scripture: John 8:34–36; Romans 6:16–18; Galatians 5:1

Spotlight: Who you serve will enslave you—or set you free.

Summary: Jesus changes everything when we turn from sin and call on Him to save us. He alone can transform our bondage into true and lasting freedom. Only Jesus sets captives free—and only Jesus keeps the free from returning to chains.

Those He saves, He also leads. Freedom is not only received; it is followed. When we walk with our Savior, we remain in the liberty He purchased. But when we drift from Him, we step back toward the very captivity He died to break.

Grace pardons completely, yet grace also calls us to live differently. We have been released from sin's prison to walk in Christ's freedom—and that freedom is preserved as we continue to follow the One who set us free.

Bob Dylan - "Gotta serve somebody"
*But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
You're gonna have to serve somebody
Well, it may be the Devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody*

I. Not Free - Sin Enslaves those who go on sinning.

John 8:34–36 NLT

“Everyone who sins is a slave of sin... So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.”

Romans 3:23

People often think freedom means doing whatever they want. Yet Jesus exposes a deeper truth: whatever masters and controls us becomes our slavery and bondage. Sin promises pleasure but produces captivity.

Real freedom begins when we admit we are not free but are slaves to sin turning to Jesus, the only One who can set us free.

Hymn - At Calvary

PRAYER: Pray for people who are living in bondage and not yet free. Pray for them by name. If you are in bondage, ask the Lord to set you free.

II. Set Free - Jesus Liberates those who ask Him and He changes bondage to freedom.

Romans 6:16–18

16 Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. 17 Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. 18 Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

We were once compelled by sin's authority, but now we belong to righteousness. The gospel does not leave us autonomous—it places us under the grace-fueled rule of Jesus.

The heart set free by grace begins to desire what is good. To honor the one who sets us free.

PRAYER: Give thanks to the Lord Jesus that you have been set free. Thank him for setting free those you love. Thank him for setting free those who are part of our church family and the community of faith.

III. Stay Free — Those who are set free must guard their freedom.

Galatians 5:1

So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.

Freedom in Christ is both a gift and a calling. Jesus has already broken the chains, yet believers are urged to stand firm in that freedom.

To live free is to stand daily in grace: accepted, forgiven, secure. From that place, we can resist, with God's help, anything that would re-enslave us—sin's pull or legalism's pressure.

Freedom flourishes when we rest in what Christ has done and walk by His Spirit. We are not striving to become free; we are learning to live as those already set free.

PRAYER: Ask the Lord to guide your life so that you stay free. Confess any disobedience. Commit your future to honor the Lord.

Next Steps: "Jesus breaks chains today—freedom begins when you totally surrender to Him."

Life Application:

1. Jesus says sin enslaves, yet many people think of sin as freedom or pleasure. Why do you think sin can feel freeing at first but enslaving over time? Where have you seen something that once felt harmless or enjoyable become controlling or spiritually dulling in your life?
2. In what ways do people redefine freedom differently from Jesus' definition in John 8? How does the gospel challenge our cultural assumptions about autonomy and self-rule?
3. Jesus links slavery not just to actions but to patterns ("everyone who sins"). What recurring attitudes, reactions, or desires tend to pull you back toward bondage even when you want to obey Christ?
4. Romans 6 teaches that everyone serves a master—sin or obedience. How does this reshape the idea that freedom means having no master at all? Practically, what does choosing obedience look like in a current decision, habit, or relationship you're navigating?

5. Paul says believers now “wholeheartedly obey.” What is the difference between reluctant obedience and wholehearted obedience, and what produces that change? Where might God be inviting you to move from external compliance to internal surrender?

6. Verse 18 describes believers as “free from sin” yet “slaves to righteous living.” How can commitment to righteousness actually increase joy and freedom rather than restrict it?

What spiritual practice (Scripture, prayer, accountability, service) most helps you experience obedience as life-giving rather than burdensome?

7. Paul warns believers not to be “tied up again.” What are subtle ways Christians can drift back into bondage—not only to sin, but to performance, guilt, or legalism? Do you tend to drift more toward license (carelessness) or legalism (self-effort)? What helps you return to grace-fueled freedom?

8. Freedom in Christ must be guarded intentionally. What rhythms, relationships, or boundaries help sustain spiritual freedom over time? What is one concrete step this week that would strengthen your freedom in Christ (confession, removing a trigger, seeking accountability, renewing truth in Scripture)? Chose a trusted friend to discuss this subject with and share the step you are taking to strengthen your freedom in Christ. Ask them what step they need to take?