

How the Truth Sets Us Free

Christ, Freedom & the Resurrection

John 8:31-37

Perhaps a couple random facts about me before we get started. I don't like spending money on someone to wash my car. I don't like that. Perhaps it was the way I was raised, I don't like sitting there on my posterior end watching someone do something I'm very capable of doing myself. I feel lazy when that happens. So I don't like doing that. You should also know I hate washing my own car. Hate it. And further more, I don't like driving around in a dirty car. So you see where that leaves me. It leaves me doing what a lot of you do I'm sure and that is you go to that thing that the gas station has as an appendage that tries to pass itself off as a car wash. You've been through that little tunnel of love, you go in there and it sprays on your car? I've done that countless times successfully, as successful as you can be in that scenario. It's fairly cheap, it's something you know I don't have to watch someone doing it so I do it, it's not very good but I do it and recently though I was pulling into that want-to-be car wash and I just oblivious to reality, I pulled in there with my rear windows rolled down. (1:53)

I learned pretty quickly into the process that I had them down when I felt water smashing against the back of my head. There's a little table, like a lunch table, like a little picnic table that sits right outside the entrance of the car wash, which I don't understand it's got to be a terrible place to have lunch. It's really loud and all that. But there's a guy eating his sandwich out there who clearly saw this coming. And I'm sure I gave him a good laugh that day, but I much prefer that he warned me, that would have been good. Maybe he thought I knew what I was doing, wanted to wash the interior and exterior at the same time. Maybe he thought I'm an idiot and I get what I deserve, I don't know. Perhaps he just didn't care, but he saw it and said nothing and that didn't make me happy. Like the person you question their friendship when you've got mustard on your face or whatever and they don't tell you through the whole meal. You feel like if you're my friend and you care about me you should risk telling me something even though I don't want to hear it. But if it's something that's wrong, I mean you point it out, tell me that. (3:00)

Well of course as Christians we open the Bible and we see a Christ who cares so much about us that's he's willing to risk our feelings by telling us the truth. Telling us the truth and if there's impending danger he has no problem pointing it out and saying, "Watch out, you better deal with this problem because there's consequences coming." And most amazing about Jesus is that he loves us so much that he was able to step into time and space to fix our problem before we suffer its consequences. And the passage I'd like us to look at together today I would love for you to see in this text all those things going on that reminds us how compassionate and caring and how loving Jesus Christ actually is, even though these words are pretty tough words. If you brought your Bibles I'd love for you to turn to John chapter 8, if not you want to look in one of our Bibles it's right there under the seat in front of you or you can call it up on your phone or iPad whatever you got handy. And go to John chapter 8 I want to look at seven verses together this morning about a loving Christ who's willing to look at us, see a problem which he clearly sees, explain it to us and he even in a subtle way references the fact that he's going to fix it. Take a look at this; this is in John chapter 8 verses 31 through 37. (4:21)

Here's how it starts, John records these words, so Jesus – John 8:31 – said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." And 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'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, - Jesus doesn't stutter you understand that when he says that he's trying to make very clear, this is something you must clearly understand, here is the core, the heart of this passage – 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. I know you're offspring of Abraham, yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you." (5:24)

Now, those are pretty rough words from Christ. Hard words from Christ to tell a group of people that according to verse 31 believed him, what he was saying, there you can glance up to see some of the things he was saying. They believed him, and then he says, "Listen if you abide in my word, then you are truly my disciples," So right now



you're not my disciples and then it says in verse 32, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. So that's all future tense, apparently he's making very clear you don't know the truth and you're not free. But I can fix that problem; you can know it and you will be free. And of course they got it clearly in verse 33, wait a minute, no we're offspring of Abraham we've never been enslaved to anyone. How is it you say you will become free. Well here's the core of the problem, truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. That's the core of this text. And that is that the problem that human beings have is the problem of sin. And he personifies sin as a slave master here and you are the slave of sin. And if you think, well practices sin yeah I guess we all qualify for that. (6:28)

Now again I'm assuming the definition here, maybe I'll give you a quick Mike Fabarez definition of sin. Before we look at the solution of freedom we better look at what the problem means, just a very simple with the risk of over simplifying here's what the Bible says about sin. It is the things that we do, things that we say, and even things that we think that we ought not to. I mean that's the basics of it. Things that we do, things that we say, things that we think that aren't what they ought to be. Now the newsflash for our current culture is God gets to define "ought", right? That's important for us in our day to say in the olden days we wouldn't have to make that clear, but God is the God who is able by virtue of his position as Creator to look as his creatures and say, "Here's the ought, here's what you ought to do." And when you fall short of that God standard, then much like verses that many of you memorized as little kids, well that's called sin. And all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That standard has been violated. Well then you say, "Wait a minute, if that's sin and the people who do that are a slave to sin well I guess you're saying everyone is a slave." That's right but you'll see they responded immediately in verse 33, not us, we're not slaves. Apparently they didn't get it. And that's the thing about slavery of sin, it would be good to note this, if you found a worksheet there in your worship packet you might want to pull that out and jot this down. Number 1, you need to understand that about the mastery of sin. What it is. It is a liar. I put it this way, we need to, and this is what Christ is offering, be freed from sin's lies. (8:00)

1. Be Freed from Sin's Lies

Sin loves to lie, it's good at it, it's an expert at lying and because the Bible says that if you practice sin you're a slave of sin and these guys couldn't even see that they were enslaved. I mean one of the things that Jesus wants to do is fix their perception of themselves. That's a good place for us to start. See because if you were to open up the microphone and I were to call every person up to the platform who has had a genuine biblical encounter with the Jesus of the Bible and they've had this thing take place as you know, if you're not a Christian you know these people had this encounter with Christ and their life is different after that. I can point out to you when they gave their, quote unquote "testimony" that there's a point in time that what they believed about themselves it changed, it radically changed. And it didn't, and this may be a surprise to you, it didn't change for the better. (8:48)

It's a lot like that old familiar hymn that I'm sure you've heard countless time. Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a good guy like me. Remember that song? Average guy like me. What's? Who saved a [audience response, saved a wretch] Who are you calling a wretch? I mean come on, that's a harsh word. A wretch like me? I mean I don't want to be called a wretch; I don't want to see myself as a wretch. I mean you see someone in your family standing in front of a mirror and saying, "You wretch." You'd probably find him a therapist for something. You've got a self esteem problem here, that's a real bad problem. See that's what the encounter with Christ does in peeling back the blindness of people to see themselves in the mirror of God's word for who they really are. Matter of fact do you know the next line? I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see. That's why a lot of people don't want to become Christians, you understand that? They don't want to become a Christian because you're telling me that my encounter with Christ is going to make my perception of myself be that I'm some bad person. (9:57)

Well, they responded, verse 33, listen we're not enslaved to anyone. This is a good historical marker for you to catch very clearly. I mean you don't have to know much of the Bible to know, well wait a minute weren't the Israelites enslaved? Trust me, the Jews that responded to Jesus' teaching right here and Jesus himself they all knew about the political governmental slavery of Israel and it wasn't just Egypt that enslaved them. It was Egypt and then it was Assyria and then it was Babylon and then it was the Persians, the Medio-Persians and then it was the intertestamental period, it was the Macedonians and the Assyrians and then by the time of Christ it was the Romans that had them under their thumb. Clearly they were enslaved in geopolitical terms but they understood that Jesus was saying something about the interior of their lives. We're talking about sin we're talking about doing something in



relation to my behavior, my thinking, my life. And you're saying I've got some sort of enslavement. They knew that he wasn't talking about their history as conscripted people. They were saying, "We're okay, we're okay." If you're trying to make a commentary about the interior of my life, you want to make me feel like a wretch, I'm not a wretch, I'm okay. If you want to break this down further, when it comes to being freed from sins lies one of sins most successful lies is to get you to look in the mirror and say, "I'm okay. I know I'm not perfect, but I'm okay. I'm fine. I'm certainly better than the people I see on the 11 o'clock news at night. I'm a lot better than half the people in my office. That's for sure and I feel superior to most people in the cul-de-sac in my neighborhood. So I'm okay, I may not be perfect and I'm no Jesus freak and a holy Joe but I'm okay." See that's exactly what sin does. It doesn't allow us to see ourselves the way that God sees us. The enslavement of sin keeps us thinking we're fine. (11:47)

By the way the man, who wrote that song, "Amazing Grace", is named John Newton. Some of you know that name; some of you may have even read his biography. He was born in London in 1725 and by age 19 he caught a ride on a ship, a British ship that ended up being a slave trading ship, back and forth from Africa. And sure enough in time, John Newton became a slave trader. That was his occupation. And the amazing thing about his biography if you read it, his story, he actually becomes a slave himself. Long series of events you can read his biography, but now he's conscripted as a slave to a terrible, terrible slave master. Those were the worst years of his life as a slave. Then he gets freed, as a free man after slavery and he returns to slave trading. So that's an interesting biography, isn't it? Well then something happens. He has an encounter with Christ. And with all that history and background and experience with slavery, both as a slave and as a slave trader he becomes a leading voice in the abolitionist movement in Europe and with Wilberforce, he teams up with William Wilberforce and together they're able to pass the slave act, the slave act in Britain that outlawed slave trading. So I mean if there's a guy that knows slavery it's this guy who ended up in the end of his life becoming a pastor who knew what it was to be a slave trader, a slave and then an abolitionist. And he wrote a lot of songs, not just "Amazing Grace". And one of the things about that one line, "was blind and now I see" and sees himself as a wretch, listen to these words from another of his hymns, where he describes what it was like to get a clear picture of himself. (13:28)

Here's the lyrics, alas by nature, how depraved, how prone to every ill, our lives to Satan how enslaved, how obstinate our will. Can such sinners be restored? Can such rebels be reconciled? Can grace itself the means afford to make a foe a child? I mean that's just part of one hymn that continues the refrain that if we get a good honest look at ourselves we'll recognize we got a problem. Look at the words he used, depraved, enslaved, I need to restore sinners, I'm a rebel, obstinate in my will. He's got a problem with his self view. See that's what Christianity does, it helps take the blinders off our eyes to see ourselves for who we really are before God and that is the first kind of freedom God wants to offer. That's a hard truth to connect with. I understand that. (14:25)

We don't have a problem reading about truths in other people's lives. You want the truth about other people's lives; I mean people pay \$19.95 all day long to read about the salacious interesting things about other people's lives. And I did this, you can try this, you can type in Amazon.com in the category of Biographies, and there's a million biographies there on Amazon.com, and you can look for titles and descriptions that have the phrase, "the truth about". A lot of biographies titled The Truth About Hillary Clinton, The Truth About Donald Trump, The Truth About OJ Simpson, The Truth About and it goes on and on and on. There are 36,000 books I found that have that phrase in the description or the title, "The Truth About". Now we'll sit there on a Sunday afternoon we'll read through that and go, "Oh, that guy was a dirt bag after all." That's how we'll read it and it's interesting to us. But imagine if you look through that list and you do this little search and you found one that says, The Truth About and your name was there. I mean you thought I was just doing this for the sake of this illustration. What if I found this book, "The Truth About Mike Fabarez". I'd buy it, I would certainly do that, and I'd read it with great interest. And I would sit there and I would read it in judgment of every sentence, wouldn't I? What if was your name? Wouldn't you read it there leaning forward thinking now I'll be the judge of that, especially if it starts bagging on me. I'm going to say, "Oh well, that's not me, that's not me." See that's the problem, when you can see the faults and problems in other people's lives. Unfortunately we can even revel in those, but when Christ comes on the scene and he says to a group of self respecting people, "You're enslaved to sin." They go, "No we're not." You understand that's the first step in the freedom Christ is offering people in this room is, let's just start with getting an accurate view of ourselves. (16:17)

Be freed from sins lies. Now look up at verse 31 where we started another aspect of the lies that are easy to believe is that here are the Jews who just argued with Christ about the problem he's diagnosed and it starts with this description by John the Apostle. So Jesus said to the Jews who hated him, No, to the Jews that doubted him. No, to

the Jews that believed him. Huh, well it starts there, I mean the Jews believed him, if you look back up he said a lot about who he was, sent by the Father, verse 28, don't speak on my own authority, verse 29, it was he who sent me so they are believing the facts about Christ. I believe you're the rabbi from heaven, that's great. But now he's going to put his finger in their chest and say you got a problem with sin and it's enslaved you. And they're going to go, "No, no, no." See another lie of sin is to get us to think that the solution or whatever the help God might provide it's something I can portion any way that I'd like to. In other words I'll take a little bit of Christ and a little bit of the Bible and a little bit of this truth from God but once it starts to go outside the pale of what I think is acceptable then I stop. In other words it's a little bit of a smorgasbord where I can take this and a little bit of that but don't ask me to believe this that and the other about what God says regarding my life. There's a lot of people like that. I talk to people about Christ and I say you really need to follow Christ, and they say, "I believe this, I believe this, I believe this but I don't need to go there." Because a little bit of Jesus will fix the problem for me. What's important for us to catch that one of sins lies is to say really the problem, even if I admit have it, I'm not going to use the word wretch about myself or rebel or obstinate but I may not be the person I should be, I got this issue or that issue but you know what? I'll take a little bit of Christ please. What size? Just a medium will work for me. (18:11)

And that's how we are. We pick and choose our truths. We take a little bit and we think I've got enough; it'll be the solution for me if there is a problem it'll be fixed by some God. Don't give me a lot of God. Well, of course by the end of this passage in verse 37, Jesus reveals that they seek to kill him. Well, that's an interesting description of people that began in verse 31 as described as people who believed him. (18:36)

Well, what's the solution, look at verse 31, he says, "If you abide in my words." Well apparently the people that believed him weren't abiding in his word, but if you do you are truly my disciples then you'll know the truth – future tense – and the truth will set you free. Interesting I already referred to verse 37 in this regard that they sought to kill him but look at why Jesus describes them wanting to kill him. He says because my word finds no place in you. Now notice the subtle distinction there, if you abide in my words you will be my disciples. See the problem you have is my word has no place in you. Do you see both directions in that? You're not abiding in my word and my word is not abiding in you. Now that's a subtle distinction but I hope you can catch the distinction in that and ask yourself the question, okay I would like to have the freedom Christ is offering. Whatever that is, that's a good thing I get. Well then here's the thing, part of the solution to break free from the lie is to let you abide in his word and to have his word abide in you. (19:38)

Maybe I'll illustrate it this way. Let's say the last few weeks I bought some, speaking of the internet purchases, I bought some Japanese throwing stars. This is an illustration, I really haven't. And I've gotten really good at it, between books and all the meetings and all I have to do I've been in there in my office and I've been just getting really accurate with that. At night I put them in my briefcase, get home sharpen them up and go out in the garage, man I am so good with these. Now after the service I want to have a little demonstration out by the donut table. So I'm going to ask you to abide in my word and take this apple and put it on your head and stand right over there. Okay, now if I say I'm a really good Japanese Star thrower, call me Ninja Mike. You may say, "Okay Ninja Mike, I believe that." Just like they did, they believe Jesus. You might believe the words that I say, but now to say put this apple on your head and stand over there, now for you to abide in my word, is if I say stand over there you go and stand over there. (20:44)

See these Jews couldn't even take in this context Jesus saying you have a slavery problem with sin. No, we can't see ourselves over there. Abiding in his word is being able to do what he says, and if I say, "Okay, I'll stand over there." and he says, "Now, back five more paces." Well, then I go back five more paces. I'm going to direct my life under his authority. I'm going to abide in his word. But then I said, here's the other direction, verse 37, the reason you want to kill me, you're actually my enemy not my friend, is because he says, my word finds no place in you. Now there's a subtle distinction but it's a profound one. It's one thing for you to take five steps back with the apple on your head because you're trying to abide in my word, follow my directions. But you know you'd probably do it with a lot of trepidation and sweat, will you not? But what if my word abided in you? What if my word had a place in you? And I said I'm a really good Ninja Mike Japanese Star Throwing Pastor. I really am. And my word now takes residence in you. Do you see what happens? I mean there's more than just compliance to the direction in abiding in my words. Now my words have taken residence in you and you have peace, you have confidence you have trust. That's why the word belief sometimes needs to be understood that it doesn't carry with it that idea of mental ascent and agreeing to facts, these guys agreed to the facts in verse 31. But they did not abide in his word because when those facts went outside the realm of what they were willing to accept they wouldn't go there. But we need to go



there when his word takes us there and then we need to let his word abide in us, which means we need to trust him. That's why the word a lot of times in the New Testament the word that's translated believe is translated trust because it's more than just saying, "I understand, and you're a really good star thrower. No, no, no, I believe you. And if you send me somewhere to do something, I trust you, you are my King. You're my master. I believe what you say. I have confidence in that." (22:48)

As long as you're believing sins lies you'll never do that. You'll stand as a judge and an arbiter of all that God says and you'll take what you want, you'll leave what you want and one of the main reasons and the impetus for that will be because I'm okay, I'm okay. If I'm okay with myself don't tell me God's not okay with me. We need to be freed from Satan's lies, every real Christians comes to that place where they recognize that and they're able to sing, amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost now I'm found, I was blind. I had a very different opinion of myself, but now I see. (23:25)

First step but important ones let's look at the second half of this passage, John chapter 8 verses 35 through 37. He's just defined in verse 34 the problem of the enslavement to the sin that he's described as something we participate in. And he says, "Well now here's the real issue, the real threat." The windows are down you're about to drive into this car wash, here's what at stake. The slave, verse 35, does not remain in the house forever. The son by contrast, well the son remains forever. So if the Son, capital S now, sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know you're the offspring of Abraham yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. So you're not free from sin, you're a slave and as a slave here's the problem, the penalty for being a slave is that you can't stay in the house. Now this is an illustration but we understand the distinction there. I mean there was in the ancient world very clearly the birthright to the first born; he was the one that got all the inheritance. That one gets the inheritance. Now if you had a worker in the house, or a slave in the house, or a servant in the house, an employee in the house, there's a big difference between the son and the servant. The slave could at any time be sold. His term could be up. A lot of times certainly in the ancient world there were terms for your slavery. When it was done, you were done. You take your shirt and go. But the son wasn't that way. So let's put it this way. What God wants to do is change our status from slave to son so that we will not incur the penalty that slaves incur which is illustrated here as being kicked out of the house. Number 2 let's put it down that way, be freed from sins penalty. (25:08)

2. Be Freed from Sin's Penalty

That's what Jesus would like to do and the only way to do that is to change your status from servant to son. That's why the translators choose for us in this particular passage to have the small s in verse 35. The slave does not remain in the house forever but the son, small s, remains forever. So if The Son, capital s, speaking of Christ, sets you free, you'll be free indeed. Now think about that. I can have construction workers in my house, I can hire some painters in my house, and they're there and they do their job and they're gone. I can tell my son, who might feel like a slave when I tell him you got to help me paint this hallway, he's got to sit there and do it but in a sense really he's painting a house though I remind him it's not your house it's my house, I do that often. This is my house, in reality one day it'll be his house. If he was the only son, the whole thing would be his house and in the ancient world that's how it was done, the first born your house. So in a sense you need to realize you're even serving yourself, in the sense that you're serving the father because this is all your inheritance. The slave don't get it as an inheritance. You have to go on. (26:17)

Now if you're thinking just in terms of the illustration, you're thinking what happens when a slave doesn't stay in the house? Well he's got to go to another house because you've got to have a place to live. Well that's the thing about this analogy when you put it to the reality of God who says to people, "If you're slaves to sin, you don't get to be in the Father's house. Well, here's the problem, there is no other house. There's no other house. Oh no, God makes a world and right now it's filled with sin, it's sin laden, it's all messed up. But God promised to take that house and he's going to make it new and call it a new heaven and a new earth and that's going to be his kingdom. And that is the inheritance, now catch this carefully, of the Father to the Son, there's only one qualifying person. That's why the capital S in verse 36 is so important the Father gives all things to the Son, and if you know your Bibles that's starting to sound familiar. God gives everything, to put it in terms of 1 Corinthians 15, he gives the kingdom to his Son. Well I'm a slave of sin, you've already established that in verse 34. Well that's right, I am a slave of sin, but here's the thing, the Son can change my status. I can be freed from that status and I can become a son of God. Now I don't really qualify for that but here's the thing, the Son has the authority to make me a son and guess what I get? The son's inheritance. You've heard those passages about people like us, sinners who are forgiven,



inheriting the kingdom? Jesus says one day all the Christians will inherit the kingdom and what happens to the slaves? They are, here's the terminology of Jesus, cast out, they are rejected, they are ejected to use some vivid language. But the son remains and the Son there's only one that deserves the kingdom, he gets to share it, and he shares it with those he now moves from slave to son. (27:59)

Here's the problem with slaves some times, to use another word here, squatters often think if they're there long enough, they have rights to have that. I know there's even laws in California about that, but it is a weird concept is it not? You go out to your car, you've got someone sitting in your car and you say, "Get out of my car." They say, "Okay, you're right I've only been here 5 minutes." And the next week you go out from church, you go to your car there's some strange guy sitting in your car, you say, "Get out of my car." He says, "Nope, I've been here for an hour and a half, it's mine." Now there are laws, I know this is weird, I don't mean to be political but it is a weird set of laws, isn't squatters rights and all that? But think that through for a second; think about this though, isn't that how people are now? Don't people think they have rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? Well, of course we do, we believe that. We think that we have rights to have God's blessing, that we can breathe his air, that we can enjoy his world, we can eat food and all the things that we do to find pleasure and enjoyment in life. And the Bible says this; slaves will only have it for a time. If you're slaves to sin, you only get it for a time. In the end, cast into Jesus put it this way, outer darkness. Not a happy place. Here's what he said three times in the book of Matthew, where there's weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. Not a good place to go. (29:12)

I don't mean to get all heavy here on Easter morning with a pastel shirt on but listen to me; you need to understand that is a God who loves us enough to tell us the truth. You're about to go into this tunnel, the windows are down, you know what's going to happen if you get to the end of this road and you enter into eternity and you're not prepared and you still have the status of slave to sin, you are in big trouble. Matter of fact I don't want to get too heavy, I've already gotten heavy. Do you understand the Bible describes hell that way? 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 it says people who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ they are shut out from God, shut out from the glory of His might. So God says I've got a place for my kingdom's going to be and this one is kind of messed up now, but he's going to remake it, it's going to be there without reference to sin and people are going to enjoy it for eternity but here's the thing. You've got one amount of time here called, this life, to see your status changed from slave, squatter if you will, to son, heir. (30:18)

I don't have time for this but Ephesians chapter 1 talks in verse 11, verse 14 and verse 18. Those might be worth writing down if you're a copious note taker. Ephesians 1:11, 14 and 18 about our inheritance, but it makes it very clear, it is our inheritance and it's guaranteed to us as Christians, but it really is his inheritance. In him, we have this inheritance. It is an inheritance, it's called his inheritance and we get to share it, his inheritance in the saints. We share it because Christ now says, "I'll make you like me. You will have my status no longer will you be a slave, you'll be a son and that means you get to inherit the kingdom." (30:57)

How does that work? So glad you asked that, look at verse 37. Verse 37, I know that you're offspring of Abraham. Here's a little hint to it, we have to look at the rest of the Gospel of John to see it clearly but at least let's get an illusion to it. You seek – underline it – to kill me because my word finds no place in you. Now you know that's how the book ends, well it's not how it ends but the ultimate ending of the book is, he does get killed and you're thinking how in the world would God send his Son to the earth and allow this to happen? He didn't allow it to happen, he planned it to happen. Why would he plan his Son to be killed by these angry Jewish people? Why? That doesn't seem right. No, that was the whole point. It was the whole point to take the penalty of slaves to sin, which what did I say? Is ejection and rejection and then to take his own Son and treat him like the slave of sin, so that the slaves then could be treated like sons. How did he do that? He put his Son on the cross and he rejected him. Now the rejection is so intense based on the level of relationship. Follow me on this now. Depending upon how close you are to that person the rejection is increasingly painful. Some of you are nodding, you know how this works. Some stranger at the mall parking lot this afternoon walks up to you and says, "I don't like you, I reject you, I'm never going to talk to you." You go, "Well, good. Stop talking to me now." But then you go to work Monday morning. A coworker you've known for awhile. You've worked together for a few years looks at you and says, "I don't like you, I reject you, I never want to talk to you again." Ow, what did I do to you? I don't like that. Then you go to church, get in your small group and sit there and pray together and read the Bible. And you got someone there looking at you and go, "I don't like you, I reject you, I never want to talk to you." Whoa, that hurts, I mean I thought we were brothers. I reject you. Then you go home to tell your wife about it and your wife looks at you in the eye and says, "I don't like you, I reject you, I never want to talk to you again." That would really ruin your life, that's awful. The closer the

relationship the more profound and concentrated the rejection. Now tell me, what closer relationship is there in the entire universe than Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This perfect triunity of God, and the Father's love for the Son is perfect and the perfect Son loves the Father perfectly and then he puts him on a cross and rejects him. That is eternal pain, that's a kind of pain that he says I will now satisfy my justice by rejecting my Son so that he even quotes that Old Testament passage in Psalm 22 where that human voice the plaintive cry of a servant of God saying, "God why are you rejecting me", and Jesus quotes it. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Now, that wasn't a question for Christ, he knew. He knew he was the Lamb of God that was going to take away the sin of the world. But that potent moment of rejection was the rejection that you and I deserve as slaves of sin. Now here's the perfect one, the blemishless Lamb of God being treated as though he were us so that He could then look at us, and look what is says there in verse 36, and set us free so we can be free from that status forever. Well, I want that freedom, I want freedom from sins penalty. What's sins penalty? Cast out. What happen? Jesus got cast out for us so that you and I can be heirs. (34:28)

It is Easter so I should mention, how do I know this all works? Resurrection from the dead. How do I know God accepted the payment? Resurrection from the dead. He was declared as Pastor Elliot said earlier in our service, to be the son of God, Romans chapter 1 verse 4, why? By the resurrection, here he was God accepted the paid in full payment, have I been rejected enough? Absolutely and now it's paid in full, bodily resurrection. So now I have a bodily resurrection without reference to sin, now going to inherit a kingdom with out reference to sin and he says, 'I am the prototype.' Why don't we all get that now? Because we're going to finish this time on a sin laden world and we will as Ephesians 1 says, inherit the kingdom in the future. In other words, guaranteed of our inheritance in the future. We're going to obtain it, which helps us, this is a side note I have no time for this either but, the side note is a lot of preachers get up there and talk about everything that God wants to give us, he's going to give to us now. You've heard a little book it did pretty well on Amazon, "You're Best Life Now"? No one's heard of that? Come on you have to. He's not going to rant about Olsteen this morning is he? No, I'm not, I'm just going to say, that that title is something we should say, "Well that doesn't make any sense." It doesn't make any sense because the inheritance we're not going to obtain in this life. We obtain it in the next life. And we do that when we finally get a body like Christ without reference to sin. But right now, sinful body, sinful world and that's going to create conflict. (35:54)

Now let me end with this, verse 34. Jesus answered, "Truly truly everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin." Now if I turn that around, if he's going to free me, he said in verse number 32, if you know the truth the truth is going to set you free. He says in verse 36 if the Son sets you free, you'll be free indeed. But here he says, if you're going to change my status from slave to free, well the slaves are the ones who are practicing sin does that mean I'm not going to practice sin anymore? Well notice that the concept here is being freed from sin as though sin is the personified slave master. It doesn't refer to being free of sin, but freed from sin and there's a big difference there. Not just the preposition but add that 'd' at the end of free. We're not free of sin. Have you met Christians? You've met some Christians haven't you? They're not free from sin, but they are freed from sin and that's different. To be freed from sin changes my relationship to the tyrant of sin in my life. Doesn't mean I won't sin, that's very important for us to catch. The Bible is very clear, in 1 John chapter 1, it says, if you stand up in church and say, "I don't sin". You're a liar and the truth isn't in you and we can all say, "Oh yes, absolutely, especially the people in my small group." Yes everyone sins. Two chapters later though it says, you know what? If you are a real Christian, if you've been born of God your relationship to sin is now different. It doesn't mean you'll be sinless, as I like to say you will certainly start to sin less. And that's the pattern we ought to see. It's not a complete break from the practice of sin, in that you're going to fall and stumble, but the pattern of sin is going to change so that continual practice that's described in verse 34, you're going to change the relationship with that. There's no longer going to be that same practice of sin. Put it down this way, number 3, we need to be freed from sin's practice. (37:53)

3. Be Freed from Sin's Practice

Not only sin's lies, that's where it starts, sin's penalty, that's super important, Christians talk about it all the time, but now sin's practice. Perhaps I can illustrate it this way because some people still struggle with how does that work? It works like this, the Bible is very clear, when you are a slave of sin, you have desires to do whatever you can get away with that will advance yourself. You will certainly engage yourself in actions, words and thoughts that are not as they ought to be. That is your life. And the instincts of your life will be to carry out whatever you can get away with. That's why Nike can get away with a slogan, if it feels good, do it. As long as you can do that within the parameters that are socially acceptable, and sometimes even they're not, I'm going to do what I want for myself.



And the Bible compares that to like animals, instinctively acting in this life and yet when you become a Christian something changes about the interior of your life. If you are going to have an Easter lunch today and you're going to invite a lion to your lunch, don't have a vegetarian lunch, don't serve him salads. If you're going to break out and do some charades after don't plan charades because the lion isn't going to enjoy that. If you going to say let's just chill and watch a movie the lion will not be interested, it will not capture his attention, he will not engage. Why, because his nature does not enjoy any of those things. What does a lion want? He certainly wants meat and you don't even have to cook it. Just give him some raw meat. And if you don't have meat you can take him through the neighborhood because he'll want to hunt then for some meat. And when he gets his meat then he'll want to lay around in the sun all day, he doesn't care about your big screen TV, he may look at it twice, he just wants to get and do nothing like a slug out in the savanna. That's what he wants to do. Hang out and then he'll want to get up and procreate, right, probably, every now and then. Sorry. He wants to do what lions do, and that's what lions do. He doesn't want to play Bunco at your house, he doesn't want to sit around talking about Easters past, he doesn't want to eat your ham, well he will eat your ham, but he doesn't want to eat your salads. (40:03)

All of us start out that way, and when it comes to sitting down and playing Bunco or Pictionary or watching a movie, those human things, well we all are like lions and then God is going to want to make us into different people that have different interests. Well, how does that work if we still are stuck in this fallen body with all those instincts and desires? Put another illustration on top of this. Speaking of enslavement, let's talk about your phone for a second. That got quiet, didn't it? Read an article that said, the average American checks his or her phone 221 times a day. That's a lot, isn't it? You're waking hours, depending on how long you sleep, that's about every 4 minutes and 20 seconds. Hold on, that's a lot. And if you're a teenage girl, you can double that, can you not? I mean every 2 minutes would be like she's slowing down. Until of course, Mr. Hunky Dreamy Eyes, asks her out to the Cheesecake Factory and he wants to stare into her eyes and she gets lost in coral blue dreamy pools of love. Now she is conditioned like the lion to eat meat, to look at that phone every minute and ten seconds. I mean that's how she does, you watch her. But now Mr. Dreamy Blue Eyes is there and she has a superior desire to stare into the coral blue pools of love. So guess what she'll do? She will do what the Christians call, here's an old word, mortify the desire to look at her phone, what's that mean? Put it to death. She will do her best to put it to death. And even then if you watch them at Cheesecake Factory she's not even successful for the whole meal, she does check it every now and then. I hope she's dating my son, she won't check it at all, but okay, you understand how this works. But I'll tell you what she'll do, she may not be cellphone less she but she will have her cellphone out less. Why? Because she has a new interior dominant desire that over sees and over plays the desire that she's conditioned to have. (42:36)

This is why the Bible talks about the fact that when you become a Christian a battle ensues between your flesh, your natural desires and interior desires to love God but those interior desires are what I like to call your core desires and so core are they that this is your new slavery. I must stare into those coral blue pools of love. It's so dominate that it's going to win out, maybe not all the time, you're going to stumble, you're going to fall. But you will become what Roman 6 says, a new slave to righteousness. And what does that mean? Christians don't sin? No they do sin, but you're going to see a pattern that changes. Now some people that want to say I want to believe the facts about Jesus, I kind of see I've got a bit of a problem and I've responded to Christ, I've walked an aisle, I've prayed a prayer but they see no change in the pattern of sin and then that's a dead give away. Whatever you did it must have been a kind of smorgasbord Christianity thing, you've got a little bit of Jesus to fix the problem but it didn't, because real Christianity transforms the interior of your life. That's why Jesus said, "Hey, There a problem with you inside, it's not about geopolitical slavery, it's not about being conscripted by a foreign army, it's about something not right inside of your life." Jesus sets you free and when he does he sets you free indeed from the inside out. You become a slave of righteousness. It's like Paul when he says I would like to not preach some days but whoa to me if I don't. Or he says about evangelism, I don't like getting out there and sharing the gospel sometimes but the love of Christ constrains me. See real Christians have that kind of interior move to drive them to say I got to do this, I got to live for Christ. Do they live for Christ successfully everyday? No, of course not. We all stumble in many ways, it's not about perfection but it certainly is about direction and it's a new direction. It's a pattern of righteousness that's no longer the same as the old practice of sin. You're not freed to indulge in whatever human desires you have, that's not the freedom Christ grants. But it's a freedom from sin's tyranny and an enablement with a new set of desires to start seeing some real change in how you act, how you speak and how you think. (44:44)

My wife and I have been friends with more than one couple that has, had children that are deaf and that's a trying, difficult diagnosis. And what's interesting about that, certainly there have been others that have children that have been born blind but that's something that's immediately seen and it has been, and there's the child and you know the



child can't see. But the thing about having a child who's deaf is that you don't always know that they're deaf for quite some time. I mean you can go months and even plenty of people have gone years before recognizing that their child is deaf, because they still coo, they still cry, they still make noises but eventually they realize, wait a minute, my child is not hearing, and the grief of that, kind of settling into that diagnosis that my child is imprisoned in a silent world. I mean that's tough. I mean we've watched these parents and walked along side these parents and it's been hard but the last couple decades here, particularly the last decade you've seen such advancement with these cochlear implants, you know these, you've seen these? And here they do surgery to put that fiber down into the cochlear of the ear and they have that amplifier and that receiver and they send that impulse and then one day after the surgery, they turn it on. Have you seen videos of this? If not, I mean this afternoon go on YouTube and watch these kids. Sometimes these toddlers that get this surgery and then in a moment they flip that thing on and here you have a kid getting a repair to a problem he didn't even know he had. I mean this makes football player cry when you watch these videos. I mean this gets you misty. Here's a kid, bam, usually they're startled at first and then they're like, whoa, they're hearing their parents voice for the first time. That's drama, I mean that's the picture of I was blind but now I see. I mean there's the picture of someone having a problem solved they never knew they had. People walk into church and they think well I'm okay, they walk into church thinking I'm not going to incur any penalties, there's no consequences. They walk into church with a relationship to sin like a lion eating meat, I mean that's what they do and they don't even realize it. Christ said I'll set you free from sin's deception, from sin's penalty, from sin's practice and when that happens, Christians write songs like that, I was blind and now I see. Amazing grace how sweet the sound. (47:24)

Another song writer contemporary of John Newton a man named Charles Westley wrote there in the 18th century these words about his experience. Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night, Thine eye defused a quickening array, I awoke the dungeon flamed with light. My chains fell off and my heart was free. I arose went forth and followed thee. Everything that I preached on this morning right there in those great lyrics. They're worth singing, more important if you haven't experience this it's worth experiencing. Christ offers that because he loves us, it starts with a hard diagnosis. Wouldn't you want your doctor to tell you the truth about what's going on in your life? You don't want your doctor taking a big x-ray of you and putting it up on that screen, having a tumor in there that could kill you and just as you start to notice it he kind of puts his thumb over it or pulls out, you know, a happy face sticky and puts it over. Oh, don't look at that, I don't want to stress you out. Sometimes the preaching of the truth stresses us out, sometimes it's unpleasant. I mean, see Christ has to diagnose the problem to get us to see the problem so we can apply the solution. You will know the truth and the truth will set you free, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Let's pray. (48:49)

God help us to not just mouth the words of real Christians who have experienced the freedom that this passage talks about, but let each of us experience that. By starting to get real about sin's deception that the most common problem in all of the world is that people think when it comes to God they'll be fine, they'll be fine. I'm fine and they do that because they are constantly making lateral comparisons instead of looking at the fact that we fall short of the glory of God and those that do they are enslaved. We have a blindness that needs to come off of our eyes. We're deaf to the truth we need to hear. God and then the other lie that is so prominent, we think that just a little bit of Christ, little bit of God, a little bit of Bible, occasional connection with God that should solve it. When Jesus had to say, No no you have to abide in my word and my word has to abide in you. God we need our status changed and we want it changed, we don't want to be slaves, we want to be sons, we'd like to be daughters, we'd like to be inheritors of the kingdom and we're so grateful that that is available to us because Christ on a cross was rejected for us. And then God we'd like our lives to bring glory to you, and it's not going to bring glory to you if we just keep living the way we did. We don't want the pattern in our relationship to sin to change. And God it greaves us when we stumble and fall, we hate it, but God I pray that the things that would encourages us the trajectory of our lives. That we know our relationship with sin is different, it's not perfection but it certainly is a change in direction. I pray that will hearten us this morning. God thank you so much for the reality of your powerful ability to let the chains fall off so that we can stand up and follow you. Thanks for making this clear in this text for us this morning. In Jesus Name, Amen (50:49)