

Theme: Christ came to give us true freedom, the ability to be who we were created to be – the image of God, serving others in love.

I. Intro - A Day To Celebrate Freedom

- A. July 4th - a time we celebrate independence
- B. A lot of talk about freedom this weekend
- C. Freedom - something we say we prize above all
- D. But what is freedom? How has Christ set us free?

II. Christ Came to Give Us Freedom

- A. It was for freedom Christ set us free (1,13)
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....** ¹³ **You, my brothers, were called to be free.** But do not use your **freedom** to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. Galatians 5:1, 13
 - 1. Freedom is a major theme in this section
 - 2. Freedom & slavery a major theme in whole letter!
 - 3. Freedom is the very nature of the work of Christ (v1)
 - 4. Freedom is the very nature of our salvation (v13)
- B. Jesus said freedom was central to His work
The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. **He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners** and recovery of sight for the blind, to **release the oppressed**, to proclaim **the year of the Lord's favor.**" Luke 4:18-19

- 1. This is how Jesus began and described His ministry
- 2. Freedom for prisoners, releasing oppressed
- 3. Year of the Lord's favor - Jubilee; freedom from debt

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³²Then you will know the truth, and **the truth will set you free.**" John 8:31–32

- 1. Jesus discipled the truth and are set free
- 2. The follow Christ is to experience freedom

III. The True Nature of Freedom

- A. Insufficient ideas of freedom - then and now
 - 1. Ancient world - free man as opposed to slave - a very limited view of human freedom
 - 2. French – "Liberty consists in being able to do anything that does not harm others." - From Article 4 of "The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen"
 - 3. America - the power of unfettered choice
 - 4. But is this what Jesus and Paul mean by freedom?
- B. The true nature of freedom - in Scripture AND reality!
 - 1. True freedom is not found in making the choice to indulge our sinful nature
You, my brothers, were called to be free. **But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature;** rather, serve one another in love. Galatians 5:13

Live as free men, but **do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil**; live as servants of God. 1 Peter 2:16

- a. True freedom is not found in indulging our sinful nature
- b. Freedom is not the ability to choose, but the ability to choose rightly

2. True freedom is freedom from sin

Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, **everyone who sins is a slave to sin.**” John 8:34

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? Romans 6:15–16

- a. This is why freedom is more than liberty of choice
- b. When we choose sin, it enslaves us
- c. Sin is NEVER true freedom

Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶ **So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**” John 8:34–36

- a. Jesus came to set us free from slavery to sin
- b. We are set free from the penalty of sin - justification
- c. We are being set free from the power of sin - sanctification

d. Our freedom is a freedom not to sin - not a freedom to sin!

3. Freedom is found in serving others - not just myself!

You, my brothers, were **called to be free**. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; **rather, serve one another in love.** ¹⁴ **The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”** ¹⁵ If you keep on biting and devouring each other, **watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.** Galatians 5:13–15

- a. This is why freedom is not just choosing what I want
- b. We are called to serve (doulos - slave) one another
- c. This reflects reality of how we were created
- d. This is why it is the summary of the law - it “fits” us
- e. If we choose our own way, we destroy each other!

4. True freedom is being like Jesus!

But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Colossians 3:8–11

- a. Our new self is in image of Creator
- b. Our freedom is in being in image of God - not in sin
- c. Christ is the model to which we are being conformed
- d. This is why morality doesn't change with time &

culture - it mirrors Christ, not culture

5. DB Hart quote on true freedom

It has become something of a commonplace among scholars to note that—from at least the time of Plato through the high Middle Ages—the Western understanding of human freedom was inseparable from an understanding of human nature: to be free was to be able to flourish as the kind of being one was... To choose awry, then—through ignorance or maleficence or corrupt longing—was not considered a manifestation of freedom, but of slavery to the imperfect, the deficient, the privative, the (literally) subhuman. Liberty of choice was only the possibility of freedom, not its realization...

David B Hart “The Pornography Culture” in The New Atlantis (Summer 2004)

IV. Applying the Word

A. What do you think ‘freedom’ means?

1. How does your gut react to all of this?
2. Have we bought the lies of our culture:
 - a. Freedom is about my rights rather than my responsibilities?
 - b. Freedom is self-indulgence rather than self-indulgence is actually slavery?
 - c. Freedom is unfettered choice to do whatever I feel like, rather than being like Christ?
3. Soak in the Word - Paul said image comes through being renewed in knowledge (Colossians 3:10)

B. Are we walking in real freedom?

1. Am I a slave to sin? Or have I received freedom in Christ?
 - a. Have I trusted Christ ALONE for justification?
 - b. Am I receiving grace and power for sanctification - increasing freedom from power of sin?
2. Am I becoming what I was made to be - through Jesus?
3. Am I devoted to serving others - or just myself?

C. Communion - receiving freedom from Jesus!

The True Nature of Freedom

Galatians 5:13-15

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Communion

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24

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