

The Truth Part 9: The Truth Sets God's People Free

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The Truth

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Bible Text: John 8:31-36

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"Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through His infinite mercy,
His child, and forever I am.

Redeemed, redeemed,
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it,
His child and forever I am.

Redeemed, and so happy in Jesus,
No language my rapture can tell;
I know that the light of His presence
With me doth continually dwell.

I think of my blessed Redeemer,
I think of Him all the day long;
I sing, for I cannot be silent;
His love is the theme of my song."

Please turn in your Bibles to the book of John, John 8, and I'll begin reading in verse 31. This is the ninth message that I'll preach on this theme that we've been looking at, "The Truth: the truth in its essential elements." Beginning in verse 31 it says,

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him [they gave outward evidence that they believed Christ], If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant abideth not in the

house for ever: but the Son abideth forever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

There is an essential element of the truth that I am believing more and more is the consequence of preaching and believing the truth, and that is the truth of God always liberates, always sets free the people of God.

You see, these Jews were blind to the bondage that they were in even naturally, just like we all by nature, everyone born of Adam is blind to the state of bondage that we are in as sinners. As a matter of fact, they said, "We were never in bondage to any man," when right then they were in bondage to the Romans. But the truth is that man in his natural state is in a bondage that is beyond almost description. He is in bondage to Satan. The Scripture has Paul speaking to Timothy about men being taken captive by Satan at his will. They are in bondage to their fallen, sinful nature. That's why there's no such thing as the free will of man. His will is in bondage to the nature of sin. We are in bondage to the traditions of men. We don't realize how much we believe, depend on, rely on the traditions of men, the things that we are taught by those that go before us. We are in bondage to the law of God. If we, in any way, are seeking by that obedience to the law in ourselves to possess righteousness before God, that's simply bondage wherein we are brought, and we are in bondage to sin. Sin has dominion over us in ourselves. We are not free to do those things that God would have us to do. So in every way we are in bondage and our bondage is so complete, it is so thorough in every way, it is so much so bondage that Christ is the only one that can, in the truest sense, set us free.

Look over in Luke's Gospel in chapter 4 at what Christ said when he went into the synagogue there in Nazareth, and he spoke words of prophecy that had been prophesied by Isaiah the prophet in chapter 61, and he says as he took the book, he took the book from the rabbi in the synagogue and he found a place that it was written, and that he says in verse 18 of Luke 4, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives." It's a proclamation of deliverance to the captives, "and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Deliverance and liberty and, "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

That is exactly what Isaiah prophesied that Messiah would do. He would be a deliverer and he would set these captives free. As a matter of fact, there is a term in that Scripture that describes them in a most unusual way. God's people are described as prisoners of hope. In other words, they are by nature and birth and in themselves with regard to all these things, prisoners but they are because of his grace, prisoners that have hope. There is hope for them and that hope only is in the Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ in his death on the cross did exactly that, and like a prisoner, like a prisoner who sits on death row has a lawyer who does everything legally necessary to set him free, in court he is by this lawyer's work determined to be a free man but he does not know it yet. A thing has been decided in the court, his freedom has been determined by the court, he is in that state of free man, but he's still sitting down there in the prison on death row. He does not know he has been freed. And so the messenger comes and he finds out when the lawyer brings him

the court documents that say he is free, that he is able to know it in his experience and rejoice in what he has been given, and that is exactly what the Gospel is, that is exactly what the truth does. The Lord Jesus Christ in his coming into this world, in his establishing righteousness for his people, in his paying the sin debt, in his coming before the justice of all and securing their justification, that is a finished and accomplished work that he did. But when they come to hear and know and believe the truth as it is in the Gospel, the truth of God's Gospel is what God uses to set his people free, to deliver them from this justice, to deliver them from this bondage.

Look over in Romans 8, and I'll say this to you this morning: if a Gospel does not liberate a person in all these ways, it is not the Gospel. Look over in Romans 8 and beginning in verse 1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." These are taught of the Spirit of God.

Now look at verse 2, he says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." What in the world is that? Is it Moses' law? No, it's not Moses' law, it's the Gospel. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," that's the Gospel, notice what he says, "hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The Gospel, the truth as it is in Christ crucified, has liberated me, Paul says, has delivered me so that now there is no condemnation whatsoever in Christ Jesus.

And look back at what it says in our text here in John 8. He speaks these words to these Jews who professed to believe what he said or to believe on him as the Messiah, and he says this, "If you continue in my word," if you continue in what I say, if you continue in the word of God, "then are you my disciples indeed." You're really those who have learned of me, who are taught of God, who know the truth. Then it says in verse 32, "And ye shall know the truth," not error, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The only thing that can make us free in our experience, free in the sense of the liberty that is in Christ Jesus, is when God enables us to believe the truth. Now these Jews, they thought they were never in bondage to anybody, but the truth is, as far as our natural state and condition, the truth is that we are in bondage in all these ways but the truth is also that Christ has delivered, has liberated his people from this bondage in every sense of the word.

You see, the Gospel proclamation, the proclamation of the word of truth is to God's elect like the Jubilee trumpet was. Under the law that was given to Israel, whenever that Gospel trumpet was sounded which was really a trumpet made of a ram's horn, the ram that was a picture of the sacrifice, of the Passover lamb, that which was a picture of the finished work of Christ, whenever that was sounded out in Israel at the Jubilee year, that meant a ceasing of all works and it meant a freeing of every slave, a restoration of one's inheritance. And so whenever that ram's horn was sounded, sounding what pictured a finished work of Christ, a complete liberating work of the Lord Jesus Christ from all our sin and from Satan and from everything else, whenever it was sounded it was a type of the Gospel. It was good news to that person that was enslaved. It was the word that the sound that only said, "Go free. You're free. You're not a slave anymore." And sad it is in our day, there's so much preaching that puts people in further bondage that keeps them

from enjoying the liberty and the freedom in Christ Jesus of being delivered and set free from all these things. It's an uncertain sound. It's a bitter sound. It's a deadly sound.

David says this, he says in Psalm 89:15, "Blessed is the people." Everyone wants blessings now, everybody's blessed, well, here is what David said, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." That's an allusion to that trumpet, to that ram's horn that was sounded which sounded a sound of liberty and freedom from enslavement and bondage to all the people of Israel who were in that state and they were in that one sound delivered.

Why? That's a good question. Why? Here's a man over here, he's got a fellow who sold himself into slavery, here's a man who's depending on his worker to work and all these different things, why should he turn him loose? Why should he set him free? Why should he forgive his debt? Because God said so and that's why liberty is to be preached to the people of God and if it does not liberate, it is not the truth of God. It's what God says that always is to believe.

And the death of Christ, the death of Christ accomplished on the cross for his people what is called an exodus. An exodus. Just like Israel's liberation from Egypt is called the exodus, well, when Christ was transfigured on the Mount of Transfiguration and he stood there with Moses and Elijah, if you'll remember, and he was transfigured, he was glorious to behold that it says that he appeared in glory and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. Do you know what that word "decease" means? It means exodus. He was speaking about an exodus not only of his own self but all his people that were in him. He was speaking of a death that he would accomplish and when he brought himself out of that grave, when he triumphed over all the powers in his cross, as Paul says, he brought him out, he brought an exodus just like Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt. They were delivered, they were freed as slaves from the taskmasters and he wrought this and accomplished it. When Moses and Elijah and Christ were talking there in that moment of transfiguration, they weren't talking about something that he would make available or make possible. They weren't something that he would do in his death to help people or give them a chance to be delivered from their bondage.

He spoke of his decease which he should accomplish, and that's why the truth of the Gospel liberates men or it's not the truth. Anything that puts men in bondage is not the truth. Anything less than a total deliverance from sin, a deliverance from the power of Satan, a deliverance from everything that enslaves us and puts us in bondage whether it is to anybody or not, is not of God. The Bible says we are accepted in the beloved, so the Gospel cannot be about you accepting him or accepting his work when it says, it declares that people who believe are accepted in the beloved.

The Bible says that we are complete in him. You can't add anything to completion. You can't add anything to his finished work. You cannot improve upon that which is done. There is nothing but Christ and him crucified that makes up the totality of our salvation. He's the Savior. He's the liberator. He did what Messiah was supposed to do and John says the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

It seems like that there is always a deceptive, devious gospel going around in this world, and men and women are told that God will forgive them of their sins based upon something that they do, he'll forgive them of past wrongs and ungodliness and whatsoever, but really when it comes from now on you've got to live in such a way as to live holy and therefore be accepted before God, and live in such a way as to be acceptable to enter into his heaven. Is that what John said? John said the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. All sin past. All sin present. All sin future. In other words, he has delivered us from the bondage of our sins in their entirety. They were made to be on his head and imputed to him and he delivered us from all sin, and anything preached that calls for men to do to be saved, or anything that calls for men to do anything to stay saved, or anything that's preached for men to do to use as evidence of being saved, or any part of salvation whether it be sanctification or redemption or wisdom or righteousness, is bondage and works. It's not the truth. It's not the truth.

Turn over to 2 Corinthians 3. I'm glad the Lord taught me this verse early on. I've used it in my own experience many times. We know according to what Christ says in John 14:16 that the Spirit of God, now the Spirit of God, the third person of the Godhead, the Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth. That's what he said. Look what Paul says in verse 17 of 2 Corinthians 3, he says, "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." There's liberty. And oftentimes I have read something, I have heard something preached and I sat there and I listened to what was said or what was written and I thought, I had the awfulest feeling, just felt bound up, I felt the witness of God's Spirit in me was negative, not positive, and most every time it had something to do with something legal, something of bondage, something to bring men under the rules and regulations of men, something that made me feel bound up and not free in the liberty of Christ Jesus. It brought me to work and to labor, not to rest and rejoice, and I determined couldn't be the truth because the Spirit of truth, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, or as the margin says here, freedom. Freedom.

Men preach the law in order to bring men and women under bondage. They want to have their slaves, slaves to what they know, slaves to what they tell people. They have people under their thumbs so much so that some preachers even have the key to their members' houses. What? You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. They preach rules and regulations to control and further imprison and glory over all their followers. They bind them with guilt, "If you don't do this, God'll get you. If you don't do this, you won't get a reward now." And the list is unbelievably long but it always winds up in one thing: bondage.

I think over the last few years I've heard more people wherever I've gone to preach or who have written me, or what have you, talk about knowing something now about freedom that's in Christ Jesus. You see, it doesn't matter what a man stands up and tells you to do, it matters what God in his word has set forth and told you he's done.

We're gonna have a rule for our church. I remember when the Lord first showed me the truth beginning as a pastor of a church that knew nothing about the Gospel, the first chance I had, I took down that so-called church covenant. You say, "Why, preacher? I

thought that's pretty good." It's never good to tell men and require of men things that God never said that they must do. Never. You don't add like the Jews did to the written law all their oral law. That's just the way it is today. They set rules. They seek to bring people under the law under the guise of it being a rule of life, and it only genders bondage. They have their confessions. They have their requirements. You've got to wear your hair a certain way. You've got to dress a certain way. You can't drink a certain thing. You can't eat a certain thing. You can't watch a movie. You can't own a tv. And on and on. They just put people under one bondage, put the noose around their neck, put the chains and shackles on them and they become slaves.

God forbid, that I would ever seek to bring those that Christ died for to liberate under any kind of bondage. Some people if you miss two services, they'll throw you out. You can't be thrown out of the church of God. Some people if you were to drink a glass of beer or a glass of wine, they would nail your hide to the wall. As a matter of fact, that's what that church covenant required, to abstain from every alcoholic beverage. Well, that would mean Christ couldn't be a member of that church. The people of God have been liberated from these things.

A man told me one day when I just happened to see, I hadn't seen him in a long time, a preacher, I hadn't seen him in a long time and I saw him at a restaurant down in Sneads Ferry and he spoke to me and greeted me and everything, and he said, "What you been up to?" I said, "Well, I've been with these two fellows, I've been playing a round of golf." He said, "Oh, golf." He said, "I preach against those things." I told him right there on that occasion that I quit preaching against such things and I've started preaching somebody, Christ and him crucified.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. Now you can take all you want to to try to put people under the bondage of the law, but that Bible, that word of God, that truth is going to say the same thing every time you go to Romans 10, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. They say, "Well, we've got to do this to be living righteously." Did you not hear what they said, what the Scripture says? "There is no righteousness apart from the Lord Jesus Christ." How did he become the end of the law for righteousness? He satisfied the law in his death by satisfying the penalty and the payment of the law. When a bill is paid, that's the end of it. When a sentence is served, that's the end of it.

He did it by dying in the place of his people. When he hung on that cross and he said, "It is finished," you can count on it, it was. The work of salvation, the work of righteousness, the bringing in of everything that God requires to stand justified before him, everything necessary to our salvation, to our joy, to our eternity, everything is necessary and when God saves us and reveals the truth to us, he's not hitching us up to a plow. Gotta go pulling for the Lord. No, the Lord's been pulling me a long time. Gotta go work for the Lord. No, Christ has already done the work.

Look over in Romans 6 beginning at verse 17 at what Paul says. Paul is so, he's so clear on this. Verse 17 says, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." You've obeyed

from the heart which is you've believed the Gospel that God sent you, this good news. "Being then made free from sin." I remember as a young person and singing a song that said, "Born again, free from sin. I'm happy night and day." I went back this morning and checked what the words are. Works. All works. But here it says, "Being then made free from sin," made free, free from sin, "ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." Do you suppose that when he says you were the servants of sin he was just talking about you were a bunch of drunks and whoremongers and harlots and stuff like that? He was talking about those who were such but probably moreso about those who were such as the Pharisees. They were the servants of sin. We all are the servants of sin by nature and we multiply, this being a servant of sin not by just what we do or what we say, but by our trying to make a righteousness before God that he will accept.

"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin," free from sin in Christ crucified, his blood washed away our sins, his sacrifice put away our sin, you "become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." And to show you, God gives the plainest illustration and it's in the next verse. We say it's chapter 7 but it's just the next statement. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." The law bound this woman. As long as her husband lived, she was bound to him. But if he died, if she died, that was the end.

"So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore," wherefore, "my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The death of Christ, our death in Christ freed us from the law, freed us from every connection to old [unintelligible] and brought us as resurrected people to be married to Christ. Freed. And we become free servants.

Turn back over to Exodus 21. God's elect, his believing people, they are a continual mystery to this world. You might say they are the freest servants that can be. Exodus 21:1, "Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them." That's God instructing Moses. "If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing." Well, I think I ought to keep him seven or eight years. No, God says he goes out free for nothing.

"If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free." Now he is free but he's bound by love. He loves his master. "Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever." He took him down there to the judges, he took him down there where the legal seat was. It's known to everybody that this man is a free man. His master has freed him, but he doesn't want to go. He loves his master. He loves his wife. He loves his children.

So to show that he's a free man, they take and punch an awl through his ear and that's not for him to wear an earring either. It's so that everybody that sees him laboring in his master's house, they know he's there because he wants to be. He's free and he's willing. He's the willing bondservant. Paul said, "For he that is called in the Lord being a servant is the Lord's free man." If he's a slave in this world, it doesn't matter, he's the Lord's free man. Likewise also he that is called being free is Christ's servant. But does this freedom mean free to sin? Shall we continue in sin? God forbid.

You see, this freedom is to worship Christ. It's freedom to serve Christ. It's freedom to love the brethren. It's freedom to give Christ all the glory. It's free to proclaim liberty to the other captives. If Christ has made us free, we're free indeed. I love that sound, free indeed. And the more we learn the truth, the more we learn the truth, the more we come out of this bondage, the more that this religious world is unable to bring us under bondage, the more people can tell us something that we know according to God's word is not true and we're free from that. They say you're gonna go to hell if you do this, or you're gonna go to hell if you do that. Let them talk. And they hate it so bad when they can't bring you under bondage and they can't do it because you know and believe the truth.

Christ said to the Pharisees, they sought to bring men and women under burdens and bondage that they themselves could not even bear, and when Paul wrote to the Galatians, that was his warning. His warning was that there would be some, that they already had false brethren crept in unawares who came in privately to bind our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us again into bondage. To whom, Paul said, we gave place by subjection, no, not for one hour that the truth of the Gospel might continue in you.

The Lord died from the cross to free his people from all this bondage and woe unto the man that seeks to bring the liberated people of God under his cruel hand as their taskmaster, as their totalitarian ruler by their various rules and regulations and ideas and doctrines that they made up. Paul said Christ has redeemed us, redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us for it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."

When Paul gets to chapter 5 of Galatians, after showing us this great illustration from the Scriptures of Isaac and Ishmael, Sarah and Hagar, Hagar was a slave, a bondwoman, and her son was the son of a bondwoman. Sarah was a free woman and her son was the son of a free woman. Paul says,

"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." Hagar represents the law, the flesh, everything that man does.

"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." Those yet in bondage, persecuted, those who have been freed.

"Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free woman." What's his next statement? It begins in chapter 5, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Come unto me, you that labor and are heavy-laden, cast off your yoke, take mine. You're going to find rest, freedom, liberty, joy.

You see, when God sent Moses down there to begin this exodus, this deliverance out of Egypt, he told Pharaoh several times these words from God, in so many words he said, "Let my people go that they may serve me, worship me." I went and looked at that word "served" to see what it meant, to be a worshiper. They're not gonna worship anymore all these calves and idols and stuff of Egypt. "Let them go that they may serve me."

I want you to look at one more passage in Isaiah 58. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Well, what are they doing? "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high." In other words, all that you're doing, you're doing out of bondage, you're doing out of trying to get something by your doing. You're trying to please God by all your religion and your fast, you fast to be seen of men, you do these works to be divisive among men, but look at

what it says in the next verse, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" The fast is not your binding yourself and others, God's fast, he says, is that you're set free. You're set free.

I'm absolutely certain that the truth according to what Christ said, the truth always sets God's people free, always liberates, never binds them up to rules and to regulations and to customs and tradition and to things that men set forth and require. Go be under bondage if you want. People like that self-inflicted pain of religion. It makes them feel like they've done something for God. But the true worshipers are free, free in Christ.

Our Father, we pray and we ask you to take your word, the truth so poorly presented but nevertheless the truth, and set your people free. Be the strong man, the stronger man who goes down and binds the strong man, spoils his goods. Set them free in Christ Jesus. We pray in his name. Amen.