

I think that historically ever since our forefathers threw off the yoke of British bondage the citizens of the United States have thought that we sort of owned the word “freedom.” In fact this fascination with freedom was brought to the forefront of the world when Franklin Roosevelt gave his now famous speech laying out the four freedoms deemed to be important for the world to enjoy.

Let’s watch this together.

The four freedoms include:

1. Freedom of speech and expression
2. Freedom of worship
3. Freedom from want
4. Freedom from fear

Mr. Roosevelt tried his best to push world leaders to guarantee these freedoms around the world. They are good. There is no question about that. Wouldn’t it be great if they were implemented so long ago and successful? There is one problem with all of this. Without the most important freedom none of these will ever be realized with any completeness.

It is in the freedom of our soul, that emancipation from selfishness and blindness that Jesus Christ offers to men. This freedom is more important any other freedom offered. Jesus was the champion of freedom. He enjoyed and wanted others to experience it. He looked for men and women who were enslaved in one way or the other and offered to set them free.

In John 8, Jesus is engaged in a time of teaching and dialogue with people trying to understand the words He was speaking. These men were not prepared to receive His teaching of freedom. The question you and I must ask ourselves is, are we ready to receive the freedom He offers us.

Are we ready to listen and to respond? In the middle of His discussion with these men Jesus offers these life-changing words:

*So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.* John 8:36 NLT

*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* John 8:36 KJV

What is this freedom that Jesus Christ offers?

### **1. Let’s talk about the character of Christ’s freedom**

First of all let’s eliminate some of the current and erroneous teaching that we hear today. It is not freedom from suffering. The common problems of life will still be a part of our

lives on this earth. We will still experience things common to living on this planet. We are clearly taught in the Bible that we will experience challenges and even tribulation.

This freedom is not from temptations. Jesus' own life teaches us this. He of all people even dealt with being tempted. His freedom was not destroyed by temptation but rather made stronger. When we surrender to the seduction of wrongdoing then we begin to lose our strength as free men and women.

Jesus doesn't guarantee physical freedom. Some of the very best Christians from the apostles till today have spent time incarcerated for sharing their faith in Christ because it was against the law to do so. Was the Apostle Peter sitting in chains in prison a free man? He was. Were Paul and Silas sitting in the Philippian dungeon free men? Yes they were. They were far more free than the jailor and his family which is why after hearing them sing hymns at midnight when the earthquake came the jailor couldn't wait to find that same freedom.

Were the countless early Christians hidden away in the Catacombs only to be herded into the arena to be devoured by wild beast or burned as a human torch on a stake for Nero's parties free? They absolutely were.

Let me let you hear the words of a devout follower of Christ who spent ten years from 1695 to 1705 suffering for her faith's sake. Sometimes even imprisoned including time in the notorious Bastille in Paris. Madam Guyon was her name and she wrote this most victorious hymn while in jail.

A little bird I am, Shut from the fields of air,  
And in my cage I sit and sing To Him who placed me there;  
Well pleased a prisoner to be, because, my God, it pleaseth Thee.

Naught have I else to do, I sing the whole day long;  
And He whom most I love to please doth listen to my song;  
He caught and bound my wandering wing;  
But still He bends to hear me sing.

O it is good to soar. These bolts and bars above!  
To Him whose purpose I adore, whose providence I love;  
And in Thy mighty will to find. The joy, the freedom of the mind.

Our bodies may be held captive but God frees our spirits.

## **2. Let's think about the contents of Christ's freedom**

So what then is the content of this freedom offered through Jesus Christ? We talked about what it is not but let's think about what it is. Here are some things that make up the contents of Christ's freedom:

### **A. Deliverance from the bondage of the mind**

I didn't read it to you, just four verses back from our text you will find a powerful sentence spoken by the Lord.

*"<sup>32</sup> And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

The bondage of the mind includes the bondages of error, untruth or maybe even half-truths. We should all be desperate to find a way to free ourselves from that kind of mental imprisonment. The truth will set you free but we live in a society on information overload. With the touch of a button you can basically find out everything about anything but then you have to figure out if it is true.

In the context of this scripture Jesus is once again being confronted by the Pharisees and keepers of Judaism. They didn't have the ability to process the truth He was telling them. It's as though He was saying to them, "I'll make your religion real."

### **B. Turns religion into reality**

For these people Jesus was talking to they had a form of religion but it was not real and it was not based on a relationship with God. In another place Jesus had said to them you clean up on the outside but you aren't real or clean on the inside. He called them to live outside the temple the way they prayed on the inside. God's freedom makes us real in our walk with Him.

### **C. Causes us to know the largeness of God's heart**

Standing in front of Jesus were men who thought they were so much better than other men. Sometimes church people get into that mode and it is not very becoming. God's heart cannot be described in human terms but suffice it to say that He doesn't hate anybody. Again sometimes church people can be nasty, mean and hateful when it comes to politics, social-economic differences or toward people from around the world. Some of you listen to talk radio until it warps your minds and hearts I think. If you are feeling hateful toward anybody or your language is degrading toward others you are not reflecting the freedom of a godly heart.

### **D. Frees us from the bondage of our will**

Let me show you another verse from Jesus' teaching on this day. *"Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin.'" John 8:34 NLT*

You know what? We have to deal with this. I don't need to try to sell you on this because this earth is filled with walking, breathing, living illustrations of it. Paul Rees said, *"You commit sin, and pretty soon sin will commit you – commit you to its own prison house. It has got you! Our acts of wrong so easily repeat themselves. Repeated they become habits and as habits they become our masters and we their unwilling servants."*

A young boy once stuck the tip of his tongue onto a piece of metal in the dead of winter. It was a tear-stained, bloody mouthed boy who came into the house but he was wiser than he had been when he left the house. The point is he was free to stick his tongue out, but he wasn't free to withdraw it. It hurt to keep it there and it hurt to pull it away. So it is when we mess around with dishonesty, or immorality or anything that grieves the heart of God. We are so free to start and so helpless to stop!

But are we helpless? In the old hymn Abide with Me the writer wrote these words to describe our Savior: "The Help of the helpless." It's not going to work if you just try harder or try to exert your will over the thing that is impeding your faith. It's hearing the voice of Jesus say, "Give me your heart and quit playing around with it." Stop thinking of yourself as a stagnant pool of poisoned water that you are trying to purify and view yourself as more of a channel through which God's forgiveness and healing power will this moment start to flow when you trust Him.

*He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free; His blood can make the foulest clean, He blood avails for me.*

#### **E. Frees us from the bondage of our spirit**

The bondage our minds are broken by the victory of truth over error. The bondage of our wills is broken as Christ comes to us with God's forgiveness and love. But is that all we need?

I am going to suggest that we go a step further and let Him give us freedom from the bondage of our spirits. I am talking about our desires, our drives and dispositions that are the foundation for our conduct and actions.

So if Jesus offers all this, what conditions do we have to meet? There always a catch right?

#### **3. Let's try to understand the condition that set's us free**

Are you ready for it? It's a simple truth. Christ gives us freedom by giving Himself. He is forever free and where He is invited in there and there alone is liberty and freedom. When the Son of God dwells in the house of your soul you will be free. So what if your soul is a house what rooms does Jesus occupy? Most of them or all of them? The condition has always been the same. God started it and Jesus continues it; the condition is that we have to be willing to give up every area of our life to Him. Every time it comes back to the same thing over and over. It's the righteous that God blesses and takes care of. It's those that obey Him that He protects and extends freedom to.

Patrick Henry was a famous statesman and orator of colonial Virginia. In 1764 he was elected to the House of Burgesses where he became a champion of the frontier people, supporting their rights against the arrogant exercise of power by the aristocracy.

In 1774 he was a delegate to the First Continental Congress. In 1775, before the Virginia Provincial Convention, which was deeply divided between those who supported England and those who desired freedom, he uttered his most famous words, "Give me liberty or give me death!"

During the Revolutionary War he became commander-in-chief of Virginia's military forces, a member of the Second Continental Congress, helped draw up the first constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and was largely responsible for drawing up the amendments to our Constitution known as the Bill of Rights.

He became Virginia's first governor, and was re-elected four times. Then he retired from public life, but despite his strong objections the people went ahead and re-elected him Governor for the 5th time. But he meant what he said, so he refused to take the office.

He was offered a seat in the U.S. Senate, and posts as ambassador to Spain and to France. President George Washington asked him to join his cabinet and become Secretary of State, and later wanted to appoint him the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. But he refused all such honors and recognitions.

Listen to these words from him: "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians - not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

His Last Will & Testament was filed in the Brookneal County courthouse in Virginia. You read his will and you'll see that he bequeathed everything to his children, just as most people do. But the last paragraph in his will is especially interesting.

He wrote, "I have now given everything I own to my children. There is one more thing I wish I could give them and that is Christ. Because if they have everything I gave them and don't have Christ, they have nothing."

What a contrast to the death this past week of Robin Williams. Once again a person who had it all, wealth, fame and popularity chose to take himself out of this world.

The people of Kafranbel, Syria, have released a poignant tribute to the late actor Robin Williams, in a bid to draw international attention to the bloodshed within the crisis-hit country.

Kafranbel is a town in northwestern Syria, and a bastion of support for anti-Assad rebels. Residents there regularly produce banners and art work and post them on social media, highlighting the plight of those trapped in the conflict, Vox has reported.

Their latest banner is one of the many tributes that came pouring in after Williams was found dead earlier this week after an apparent suicide. The star's wife said he had been suffering from anxiety and depression before his death and "was not yet ready to share publicly" his struggle with Parkinson's disease.

The handmade sign is held by residents of the town and contains a quote about freedom said by Genie in *Aladdin*, which reads: "To be free. Such a thing would be greater than all the magic and all the treasures in the world." The quote is followed by: "RIP Robin Williams."

100 years ago Henry Drummond was riding in a horse drawn coach and trying to work on the driver to turn his life over to Jesus Christ. The man was reluctant and resisted but Drummond persisted. The man was worried about a certain habit that he was pretty sure he would never be able to give up.

"Suppose" said Drummond "that your horses ran away with you in command of them as they raced down a steep hill. What would you do?" Of course the man confessed that he would be helpless. "But suppose," Drummond replied, "that there was someone sitting beside you who was stronger and more skilled that could get them stopped. What would you do?"

The man quickly replied that he would turn over the reins. And then Henry Drummond pressed in with these words, "And your life has gotten out of control. It is running away with you. Jesus Christ is stronger than you, because He is God and He is asking for the reins of your life. Turn them over to Him." The man complied as the light of possible freedom dawned in on him.

Are you free? Are tied up and can't get lose? Are you ready for a change and transformation?

*So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.* John 8:36 NLT

"The first duty of every soul is to find not its freedom but its Master".  
Warren W. Wiersbe

Who is the Master of your soul? Who it is will determine if you are living in freedom or bondage.