

Christ, Our True Freedom

John 8

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God's Unrelenting Resolution For You: Freedom

Each year, as the frenzy of the holiday season winds down, most people intrinsically begin taking inventory of their lives. In a moment of inspiration, many of us begin mapping out our list of New Year's resolutions. We name the things that we long to be set free from...habits...hurts...

hamburgers. Frustrated by our lack of freedom, we resolve to be the "new us". We set goals, confess sins, count calories, and purchase ridiculous exercise equipment. Perhaps a few weeks go by without succumbing to last year's vices. But, sooner or later our resolutions inevitably unravel like a cheap sweater. We fall back into the habit...we feel stupid for buying the silly exercise equipment...we order the hamburger (with cheese). Year after year, we resolve to be free, and fall miserably short of making good on our resolutions. Where do we turn when this happens? If we can't set ourselves free, who in the world can? John's gospel is God's answer to this question. In John 8, we find that God's one, unrelenting resolution in life is to set you free (vss 31-32). Year after year, God's resolution remains the same. There is nothing God desires more than your freedom!

The Reasons We Aren't Free

Although God longs to liberate us, how many of us honestly experience lasting freedom in this life? Sadly, not many of us! What is standing in the way of our freedom in this world? Christ's answer to this question is emphatic in John 8—we are slaves to sin (vss 33-36), sons of Satan (vss 37-44a) and suckers for the lies of this world (vss 44b-47)! This answer didn't exactly win Jesus any points with his religious audience! Then again, if someone told you that your daddy was the devil how would you respond? At first glance, Christ's words perhaps seem sharp and insensitive. But Christ knows that unless He tells us the truth, we'll never experience the freedom He came to offer (vss 31-32). And so, with deep patience and persistence, Christ tells us the truth about ourselves, the world we live in, and the freedom we long for.

The Way The Truth Sets Us Free

In the Christian faith, truth is not an abstract principle but a living person—Jesus is the Truth. When Jesus says "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" He is not claiming that rigorous Bible study is the path to freedom. The Jews that Jesus encounters in John 8 studied Scripture more rigorously than most of us ever will in this life—they most likely had the entire Old Testament memorized verbatim! However, they completely missed the reason that God has given them the Bible. In fact, to the rigorously religious Jesus says, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in *them* you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, you refuse to come to me that you may have life." (Jn 5:39)

Coming to The Cross

Every page of scripture is written to lead us to Jesus, the Truth. Only He can truly set us free! Why you ask? Because He gave up His freedom on the cross to make you free (vs 28). On the cross God chose your freedom over His own—He became the prisoner so that we could be set free! Jesus laid down His life in the hope of your complete liberation! "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (vs 36) What is keeping you from fully embracing the true, lasting freedom Christ offers You today? Lay it down at the blood-soaked ground beneath the cross! Lay down your freedom to embrace the freedom of Christ! Trust that Christ will truly set you free from the sin and shame that have enslaved you! "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." (Gal 5:1)

Going Deeper

This week, as you read John 8, spend some time answering these three questions:

- 1.) What areas of my life are keeping me from experiencing true, lasting freedom?
- 2.) What lies have I believed that are keeping me from the Truth.
- 3.) How can I make a habit of coming to Christ every time I study the Bible?