

Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor David Bennett
3 July 2016
Key Verse: John 8:31-36

“Freedom in Christ”

Good morning Fil-Am, it is so good to see your smiling faces here today. As we get ready for the 4th of July, Independence Day Celebration, I would like to spend this morning concentrating on that Independence, or Freedom we all associate to this holiday but would like to extend the topic to the Freedom we have in Christ.

So for time's sake, let us get into the Word of God but even more importantly let us get the Word of God into YOU!

In order to start with a baseline this morning let us look at the definition of Independence and or freedom:

Independence

Noun

The fact or state of being independent.

Synonyms: self-government, self-rule, home rule, separation, self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy, freedom, liberty, self-sufficiency, self-reliance, autonomy, freedom, liberty

Freedom

Noun

The power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.

Absence of subjection to foreign domination or despotic government.

Synonyms: independence, self-government, self-determination, self-rule, home rule, sovereignty, nonalignment, autonomy; democracy

If you look up the word Freedom in the evangelical Theological dictionary it come up with the following definition:

Christian Liberty

To live is to choose, to choose is to live. The exercise of choice however does not in itself make us free. Choice is only the shuttle that weaves the fabric of our lives into a shroud of death or of new life, depending upon which “god” defines the values, goals, and purposes that attract our choices.

Freedom or Liberty is not that we can choose but what we choose, freedom is not then, a status but an achievement.

Therefore the freedom of the Christian is a divine gift from God.

Christian freedom resides in the obedience to the only God in whose service is liberty.

Christian Liberty thus bears two faces, (1) freedom from human disability and enslavement to the devil and (2) freedom for striving to know and do God’s will.

In today’s scripture Jesus is talking to some Jewish believers who were new in the faith. They were weak in their faith at this point, and Jesus begins by telling them,

John 8:31-36 (NASB), the Truth Will Make You Free

*³¹ “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you **continue** in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine; ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” ³³ They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that you*

say, 'You will become free?'"³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

The Amplified Bible clarifies this a little bit more by saying,

John 8:31-36 Amplified Bible (AMP), the Truth Will Make You Free

³¹ "So Jesus was saying to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in my word [continually obeying my teachings and living in accordance with them, then] you are truly my disciples. ³² And you will know the truth [regarding salvation], and the truth will set you free [from the **penalty of sin**]." ³³ They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been enslaved to anyone. What do you mean by saying, 'You will be set free?'"³⁴ Jesus answered, "I assure you and most solemnly say to you, everyone who practices sin habitually is a slave of sin. ³⁵ Now the slave does not remain in a household forever; the son [of the master] does remain forever. ³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, then you are unquestionably free."

During the Philippine Independence day celebration as well as our upcoming Independence Day celebration we will continue to hear a lot about freedom and living in a country where we are...

- Free to choose
- Free to speak.
- Free to go where we want to,
- Free to worship or not worship.
- Freedom to decide many things for yourself.

Freedom has been a part of our thinking throughout history.

At the close of an important speech to Congress on January 6, 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt shared his vision of the kind of world he wanted to see

after the war in Europe was over. He spoke of four basic freedoms which should be enjoyed by all people:

- Freedom of speech,
- Freedom of worship,
- Freedom from want,
- And freedom from fear.

Of course, World War II exploded far beyond Europe, and the world never achieved Roosevelt's ideal. Even if it did, however, we would still need another freedom the president didn't mention:

Freedom from ourselves and the tyranny of our sinful nature.

Jesus was talking to these new believers about this new kind of freedom, spiritual freedom rather than political freedom.

At that point they didn't understand what He meant and were trying to live up to a lot of rules and regulations. They had not come into the knowledge of what it meant to be **FREE INDEED** spiritually.

I don't think Christians have come into the freedom that Jesus was talking about here either because many people are living such defeated, stressed out lives rather than the abundant life that Jesus spoke about when he said,

John 10:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. "I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full."*

This means being **FREE INDEED**.

This week as I walked around in this scripture, trying to prepare for this sermon, I wondered about the word freedom and how it applies to Christians in the 21st century.

I believe it goes beyond the freedom to attend church or not attend.

It goes beyond our freedom to read the Bible, to choose the denomination we prefer, and to speak out about our faith.

When Jesus sets us free, it makes a much greater impact on our personal lives in that we are **FREE INDEED** to live overcoming, productive lives.

We should not just be barely hanging on as Christians, just getting by but Living FREE!

Sometimes I wonder do we even know we are free.

Jesus says, "If the Son sets you free you are free indeed."

We need to realize that we are free today from all kinds of things because of His freeing us.

We are free indeed. What does that include?

The 1st point I would like to discuss is...

1. Freedom from the Guilt of Sin

Sometimes we have a cloud of guilt hanging over our heads because we are guilty of sin.

We can do something about true guilt. We go to Jesus and simply say, "I'm guilty. I've sinned. I've blown it again. Forgive me."

Scripture tells us in **1 John 1:9** that "*If we **confess** our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

He takes care of our true guilt, but He also takes care of our false guilt. Sometimes we have a more difficult time with that than we do with true guilt.

Many Christians will say...

- I feel guilty because I am not good enough,
- I feel guilty because I don't live up to what I think I ought to be or should do.
- I feel guilty because I cannot get past my past...

This is one of the best used tricks of the enemy, **CONSTANTLY** reminding us of our past, saying things like, look at you, you're not worthy, remember when you did this or that...

And what happens is that we start living under a **CLOUD OF CONDEMNATION**.

Have you ever felt this hanging over you so that you lost your joy? It sucks the life right out of you.

You are trying to live up to what you **THINK** God requires or what **YOU REQUIRE** of yourself and it results in **CONDEMNATION** because you can never achieve it.

Here is a scripture that will help you, it says in Romans 8:1, *“Therefore, there is now **NO** condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”*

The Amplified Bible puts it this way,

Romans 8:1 (AMP)

Escape from Bondage

⁸ *“Therefore there is now no condemnation [no guilty verdict, no punishment] for those who are in Christ Jesus [who believe in Him as personal Lord and Savior].”*

One of the biggest things that He has set us free from is the **GUILT OF SIN**, whether true guilt or false guilt.

TODAY is the day to walk in the freedom that he **ALREADY** provided.

You are already under new ownership when you come to Jesus.

Illustration: You see the picture of a man sitting in a prison cell behind the bars, as he has been given a life sentence. However, Jesus paid the price for his crimes and he is loosed from the bondage that **SIN** had over his life. So the Cell door is now open.

The problem is the man still sets in his cell and does not come out and walk in the freedom that Christ has already provided.

All he has to do is walk out of the cell that is keeping him penned up, and for some reason he does not walk in the Freedom that has already been paid.

Now most of us here would look at it as comical or amusing but would say, that would never happen to me because as soon as the cell doors would open I'm out of there!

And yet we still have a defeated life, and do not walk in the blessings the Lord has in store for us, because we are trapped by our Past, our hurts, our hang-ups and habits, although we have been freed, we have new life in Christ, we still act as if we are enslaved by the cells of our own prison's.

The 1st point we discussed was the Freedom from the Guilt of Sin,

The second point is.....

2. Freedom from the ETERNAL Consequences of Sin

Saints please listen to me, Sin has consequences.

Much of the time we have to suffer the consequences and we can't go back and erase the results of our actions. A lifetime of self-destructive habits takes a toll on our health, for example.

- Sometimes we can't repair the damage done in relationships.
- Sometimes we can't always just "fix" things.

Parents often want to fix problems for their children because they don't want them to have to go through pain and suffering, however sometimes that is the only way they (**WE**) will learn.

What are the lessons we will never forget, (**PAIN**) when you have been hurt, broken, I'm not talking about stressed I'm talking about dropping to your knees broken, **YOU DON'T FORGET** those lessons.

Saints Sin has consequences.

Romans 6:23 says, *"The wages of sin is **death**, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

We may have to suffer the consequences of sin, we can be free from the **ETERNAL** consequence of sin through God's gift of eternal life.

We might have to experience consequences of our sin, or decisions we make from day to day. And we have to deal with the consequences of those decisions however, because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, we can have freedom from the final **ETERNAL** consequence of sin because He gets us off the downward spiral and turns us around in a new direction.

Because of this new life, we have freedom from sin's slavery, the bondage that it had over our lives.

Real freedom, therefore, is not restricted by law, as a matter of fact it can flourish only under the law.

A train is a good illustration because it is only effective when it is on the tracks for which it was designed. Tracks don't inhibit a train, but enable it to run freely as long as it is running under the power of the steam or fuel of its engines.

Loving obedience to God's law is not an effort to attain salvation by works, but an honest, heartfelt response to want to serve and please the great God of the universe who gave His spiritual laws for our own well-being.

It's not a matter of what's convenient, but of what pleases God. Freedom is not the right to do as one pleases, but the power and capacity both to will and to do as one ought.

We are no longer under sin's control. He is able to set us free from the downward spiral.

Many people don't believe this.

You might not believe it. "I can't change," you say.

It is more a matter of saying, "I really don't **WANT** to change."

We know we can change. He gives us freedom from the control of sin when we give ourselves completely to God.

We can see ourselves being unresponsive to sin. You decide to make the break and He will do the inner transaction.

You are free to choose. This is where our faith comes in.

We must believe that when we come to Christ that He does make us **FREE INDEED**.

True freedom is never freedom from responsibility, but responsibility not only for choice, but right choices.

Galatians 5:1 (NASB), Walk by the Spirit

¹ "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."

The 1st point we discussed was the Freedom from the Guilt of Sin,

The second point we discussed was the Freedom from the ETERNAL Consequences of Sin,

And the final point this morning is...

3. The Freedom to Be All that God Wants You to Be

In order to understand all God wants us to be we need to understand what his truth is.

What is the truth?

Scripture tells us that Jesus **HIMSELF** is the Truth that sets us free. He is the source of the truth, the perfect standard of what is right.

Jesus frees us to BE all that God wants us to be.

John 14:6 Jesus said, *“I **AM** the way and the **TRUTH** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

Saints notice Jesus didn't say,

- I **HAVE** the Truth or
- I **KNOW** the Truth but rather
- I **AM** the **TRUTH**.

Proverbs 28:13 tells us *“He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”*

Do you want mercy today?

Galatians 5:16 (NASB) *“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”*

We no longer have to live...

- Angry,
- Jealous,
- Hateful,
- Selfish,
- Under guilt
- Under condemnation
- Or any other of the characteristics of a sinful lifestyle.

Why would a person who has accepted God's gift still live in bondage to the same old lifestyle?

Many people want the promise of heaven when they die, but they want to live like the world around them while they are still here.

I don't think that things work that way if we are becoming all that the Lord wants us to be.

Jesus was telling these new Christians that if they continued to do what He taught them, they would REALLY be his DISCIPLES and as a result REALLY be **FREE INDEED**.

Paul says it in a little different way in 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 (NASB)

*¹⁶ "But whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is **liberty**. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."*

1 Corinthians 1: 30 (NASB) Where Paul is talking about the wisdom of God and the foolishness of men. He says in verse 30:

*"But by his doing **YOU** are in Christ **JESUS**, who became to us, **WISDOM** from God, and **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, and **SANCTIFICATION**, and **REDEMPTION**."*

Saints listen to me here, when we accept Christ he is in us and we are in him, correct?

Answer me a few questions ok, by looking at the verse and answer me this,

We are in who? (**Jesus**)

If we are in Jesus, who is in us? (**Jesus**)

Say I am wise (**I am wise**)

I am wise because of who is wise? (**Jesus**)

And who is in us? (**Jesus**)

Now say I am righteous (**I am righteous**)

I am righteous because who is righteous? (**Jesus**)

I am righteous because of who? (**Jesus**)

Now say I am sanctified (**I am sanctified**)

I am sanctified because who is sanctified? (**Jesus**)

I am sanctified because of who? (**Jesus**)

Now say I am redeemed (**I am redeemed**)

I am redeemed because who is redeemed? (**Jesus**)

I am redeemed because of who (**Jesus**)

Saints do you get the point, when we are in Jesus he is in us, and we have the Freedom that only a Christian can understand!

We are **FREE** to become all that the Lord wants us to be.

He can make it happen for you **TODAY**, the price has already been paid the **VICTORY** already won.

All we need to do in order to walk in this freedom is turn our lives over completely to the Lord.

Are you free today?

Do you have a nagging sense of guilt hanging over your head like a cloud and you can't seem to shake free of it?

If so, Jesus can take care of that.

Come to Him fully expecting Him to do it.

- Are you burdened down by the slavery of sin's control?
- Are you always being tripped up by sin's deception and temptation?

- Do you want to be free to be what God wants you to be?

Let Us Pray: