

Theme: Freedom is the ability to live in accord with human nature as created by God, which was marred by sin but is restored in Christ and revealed in Scripture.

## I. Intro - Inconceivable!

- A. Classic movie 'The Princess Bride'
- B. Vizzini - events that happened are 'Inconceivable'
- C. Inigo Montoya - "You keep using that word, I do not think it means what you think it means."
- D. A lot of people use 'Freedom' this weekend - but I do not think it means what they think it means!
- E. What is true freedom? Where is it found?

## II. Created For Freedom

- A. Humans are created as the image of God  
Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."  
Genesis 1:26
  - 1. Humans are created as the very image of God
  - 2. We are as much like God as a creature can be
  - 3. This is the basis for all human dignity and freedom
  - 4. True freedom can only be found as we fully and accurately embrace our place as the image of God.
- B. Our freedom as the image of God includes limits inherent to our created nature  
And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." Genesis 2:16-17

- 1. This is before the fall - it is NOT a response to our sin but is an essential part of our being the image of God.
- 2. We are the IMAGE of God - not God Himself!
- 3. Our culture speaks a lot about freedom, but usually assumes freedom is escaping any limitations. However, true freedom is found, not in rejecting limits, but in embracing the limits God has placed on us as His created image-bearers.
- 4. To violate the limits built into our creation is no more "freedom" than a fish deciding to flop out of the water - it is not freedom but death!
- 5. I did an entire series on this called "[The Freedom of Limits](#)" which expands on this idea with 7 teachings from Genesis 1-3.

- C. Freedom is the ability to live in accord with human nature as created by God - including the limits He has placed on our choices and behaviors in every area of life and thought.

## III. Bondage or Freedom?

- A. Our culture's false understanding of freedom
  - 1. We think freedom is absolute liberty of choice  
"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"
    - a. Originally, this was freedom for what did not harm others physically, and there is some truth in this - liberty of choice is not inherently evil.
    - b. It is true that our choices should not harm others physically - but this is a very insufficient view of freedom.

- c. Freedom is more than unrestricted choice!

The common modern understanding of freedom begins by denying any ultimate ends for human well-being beyond 'choosing' itself. Freedom in this modern view is freedom from any restrictions on choosing – including any restrictions derived from human nature, from the demands of justice, from the good that exists prior to the human will. Ken Myers

- d. What is harm to others? Is adultery? Is driving drunk? Heroin use? Gossip?
- e. While physical harm and bondage are real, so are mental, emotional, and spiritual harm and bondage!
- f. Such a view is not only philosophically incoherent, it often leads to real damage and bondage to myself and others.

## 2. This view is incoherent: we have conflicting desires!

- a. This is inherently self-contradictory - we often have conflicting desires!

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. Romans 7:15

1. Any striving for improvement knows this struggle!
2. We have conflicting desires, and often find ourselves doing the very thing we say we do not want to do!

- b. No human experiences total freedom of choice, for our will is influenced and controlled by our nature and desires.

## 3. The limits given at creation are an essential part of freedom, and to attempt to escape them is bondage, not freedom!

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." Genesis 2:16-17

- a. True freedom for created beings NECESSARILY includes restrictions to our wills, and to deny this always leads to chaos, bondage, and death!
- b. We have rejected this to think freedom is having no limits to our choices, but the entire cosmos (including our own conscience) militates against this.
- c. In our attempt to find this freedom, we act like toddlers throwing a tantrum, demanding a freedom that can never exist.
- d. This leads to the current situation where I must not only be free to choose whatever I want, but my 'freedom' demands that no one criticize my choices, and even speak and act as if they agree.
- e. This is the inevitable conclusion of the delusion that 'freedom' is the unrestricted liberty of the human will. It not only removes freedom for that individual, it ends up removing freedom from others, pressuring them to join in the bondage of others.

- f. Examples: Abortion, euthanasia, and LGBTQ+

## 4. We are not free to choose as we want, for we are slaves to sin

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

- a. We were created for freedom, but when we rejected the limits given by God, we lost our freedom.
- b. In addition to the inherent limits of creation, since the fall, we are enslaved to sin!
- c. As The Ruin Falls excerpt (CS Lewis)
- d. Every time we choose to sin, we further this enslavement. To choose sin is the OPPOSITE of freedom!
- e. 'Liberty' of choice can lead to my being enslaved by sin or helping others to experience bondage.

5. History is the sad story of this slavery being expressed in many ways as we try to find freedom apart from embracing our call as the image of God.

B. Freedom is the ability to live in accordance with human nature as created by God.

1. This is the clear teaching of Scripture, but it was also widely recognized throughout our civilization  
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)
2. When our culture says ‘freedom’, we will likely need to say, “You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.”

#### IV. The Freedom of Redemption

A. Jesus proclaims that true freedom is found in Him  
So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.  
John 8:36

1. Jesus says that true freedom is found when the Son sets us free.
2. Redemption is the restoration of God’s original design in creation - including renewing God’s image in us so that we can experience true freedom.

3. In redemption, the Father graciously welcomes us, Jesus sets us free from sin, and the Spirit works to conform us to the image of God so that we might experience freedom and flourishing.

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Colossians 3:9-10

- a. When we come to Christ, we put off the old man (our old fallen Adamic nature) and put on the new man (our new nature of the Second Adam, Jesus).
- b. In sanctification, the Spirit works to renew the image of God in us so that we become what we were created to be.

B. Freedom in receiving and obeying God’s Word

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup>Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”  
John 8:31-32

1. The freedom of redemption is NOT a freedom to do what I want - I am still under the Word and command of God, just like Adam in the Garden!
2. Freedom is still only found in accepting my place as the image of God.
3. The path to freedom is in embracing the authoritative Word of God as it applies to ALL of life!
4. But only Jesus opens the path for us and enables us to do this!

C. Freedom is the ability to live in accord with human nature as created by God, which was marred by sin but is restored in Christ.

## V. Applying the Word of Freedom

### 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: (FISH)
  - 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 the image is being renewed in knowledge (Colossians 3:10)

### B. Am I experiencing the freedom Christ gives?

1. Have I experienced freedom from the penalty of sin by having it forgiven in Christ?
  - a. There is no other way to be free from sin's penalty
  - b. Look to Him for forgiveness today!
2. Am I experiencing freedom from sin's destructive power?
  - a. Do not be deceived - sin is always destructive and enslaving
  - b. Make no mistake - sin is its own penalty as it distorts our very humanity
3. Am I letting God's Word define what is sin?

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

- a. Freedom comes from understanding and obeying the word of God
- b. It does not matter how we feel or what we think the Spirit is saying - it matters what God has said in His Word

4. Am I actively repenting of any known sin?
5. Am I seeking to put off sin and put on righteousness? THAT IS TRUE FREEDOM!

### C. The Table of Freedom (worship team to stage)

1. This is the Table of Freedom
2. Jesus gave Himself so we might be truly free
3. We will sing "Who You Say I Am"
4. Reflect on the Gospel - Christ given for you
5. Confess sin - and come to receive power from God

## What Is Freedom?

John 8:31-36

July 6, 2025

Communion/He Who the Son Sets Free

Hebrews 13:20-21

Teaching keywords: freedom; humanity; salvation and deliverance; Christian life

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, <sup>21</sup> equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” Genesis 1:26

And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”  
Genesis 2:16-17

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” <sup>33</sup> They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?” <sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:31–36