

# DAY 26

# FREE



A few weeks ago, I had my nieces and nephew over, and we did a little experiment- an object lesson on sin. Just a little public announcement for any kids listening in-; please don't do this without adult supervision.

Anyways, we took a big jug of water which was supposed to represent us and our hearts. We added a few drops of black food coloring to represent sin and watched as it slowly spread and stained the water. We talked about the different sins, including stealing, anger, fear, jealousy, and disobedience. We discussed how this can represent how sin can take on our lives and stain our hearts as well. The next step was to add some bleach. Voila!

Like magic, the water was clear again. In the same way, when we accept Jesus into our lives, Jesus has the power to remove the stains from our hearts

and make our hearts clean. Jesus is our saving power and frees us from the power of sin.

This simple children's lesson leads us to our word of the day today, which is "free." We will be talking about what it means to be "free in Christ" and "free from the grip of sin." But before we go on, let us go into our time of silence. Let us quiet our hearts and minds as we meditate on this theme:

Our scripture today is John 8:31-32: "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. "

We see this theme of "being set free" throughout the Bible, including the Old Testament. For example, during the time of Moses, we see the theme of slavery and how God freed the Israelites from the bondage of slavery. Or how about when God freed Daniel from the lion's den as he shut the mouths of the lions. God also freed Jonah from the belly of a whale after three days. God also freed Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego from the fiery furnace that not even a hair on their heads was singed.

We move from physical aspects of bondage to the bondage of sin, as discussed in John 8. Just some background on the chapter, it starts out as the Pharisees brought a woman who had committed adultery. Jesus did not condemn the woman and told her instead to "sin no more." Jesus then taught He is the "light of the world," and if we believe, we will come to know the Father. Many Jews believed in Jesus, but some continued to challenge Him as he taught people about the freedom and bondage of sin. In our passage today, he talks about "true disciples." True disciples follow Jesus in faith and obedience and stay in the Word and keep their eyes on Him. They have freedom from sin.

Before salvation, though, we had no choice. We were serving our sinful natures and the wiles of the Devil. But when Christ died, he freed us from this prison. In a few weeks, we will celebrate Easter and celebrate through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; as believers, we are set "free" from the bondage of sin.

In Trevor Hudson's "Pauses for Lent," he says: "Christ frees us from those chains holding our lives in bondage- the chains of fear, addiction, and evil from which we seek release. Christ also frees us for a new life of discipleship, obedience, and adventure. We are set free to love, to praise, and to serve God with our whole being."

However, a dilemma still is present. We can say we are free in Christ, but do we really live like we are free. There is a constant tug of war with the flesh as we live in a broken world of lust, anger, fear, jealousy, self-sufficiency, greed that causes us to wander away from the foot of the cross.

Romans 7:15-19 sums it up perfectly: "15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do... 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me... 18b For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. "

Wow, that was a mouthful! Paul was trying to say even though we are believers in Jesus Christ; we may still be struggling with something in our lives that we wish we would not keep doing, like anger, lust, fear, etc. We know it is not right, but somehow, we keep doing it. To "free ourselves," we must intentionally daily clothe ourselves as children of God. If we feel the tug with flesh- we need to confess, pray, and allow Holy Spirit to guide us. We need the Holy Spirit to mold and shape us into our Maker.

## Daily Practice

This reflection transitions us into our daily practice for today. Our daily practice is to focus on the question: What addictions and unhealthy attachments keep me from experiencing the freedom in Christ? This week, I want you to confess and renounce those sins to the Lord. Instead, I want you to fill it with a truth or promise from the Lord. For me, I know that my own fear robs me of joy and peace and affects my ability to be "free" in Christ. One of my dear friends for Christmas gave me a personalized journal with God's promises written on each page with my name embedded in the verses. I use this journal in times of doubt and fear to remember God's promises. Now I pray these truths over you.

The below reflections are written by congregants & staff of CPC. All reflections are following Trevor Hudson's book Pauses for Lent and are both heavily influenced and borrowed from his work. Any quotes without attribution should be credited to him.