TITLE: Real Freedom!

TEXT: John 8:31-34; James 4:17; Jn. 8:34-36;

James 1:23-25; Acts 16:22-28; Ps. 107; Ro. 10:9-10

INTRODUCTION: Tomorrow we will celebrate our 240th Independence Day in this nation. For 240 years we have been a free nation.

 A nation that is not under the rule, oppressive or otherwise, of any other nation.

 America has become synonymous with the word freedom..

 As a nation we undoubtedly enjoy more freedom than any other nation in the world. It is what has drawn countless millions to our shores---In search of the freedom and opportunity that only can be found in America.

 But just the fact that we live in a free nation doesn't necessarily make us free men and women does it?

 Of the individuals that comprise this nation today, there are probably more that are in bondage, of one kind or another, than at any other time in our nation’s history.

 In fact, our freedoms in this nation, in a lot of cases, are the direct cause for a lot of our bondages..

 Because we have the right to choose, possibly more than any other individuals that comprise any other nations on the planet, we have more choices available to us that can lead us into bondage.

 There are a lot of addictive substances that we are free to use in this nation that bring us under the yoke of bondage.... Just the effects of alcohol abuse alone in this country is staggering... not to mention the current epidemic of drug abuse, both legal and illegal.

 We have freedom of speech and freedom of expression and because of those freedoms pornography is available to us from everywhere from the news stand to the TV set to the internet. Many become enslaved to the grips of its effects.

 We may not be in bondage to any other nation, but, our freedom itself at times has led to our enslavement.

 Webster defines freedom as: **Not under another's control, loose, clear, unrestricted....**

 The ironic thing is that this is just how God created man.

 Not under another’s control, not even God’s own control.

 Man was created with free moral agency, with free will, with the right to choose for ourselves.

 What is ironic is that from the very beginning of time man, being free to choose, has often chosen to be in bondage of one sort or another.

 Adam, the first man, the only truly free man, made the choice of disobedience to God and by that choice he fell into bondage and became enslaved to a sinful nature…

 And since that time each and every one of us has made that same choice! The choice of disobedience to God which leads to the bondage and slavery of sin.

 Let’s go to a portion of Scripture that I believe closely parallels where we are at in our nation today.

**John 8:31 (NIV) To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.**

**32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

 Jesus was speaking to believers here. It says; **To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said:**

**If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

 Real freedom, true freedom, The freedom that God has for us, the freedom that He intended for us when He created us has nothing to do with placement, what country we may live in.

 That is why we can live in a country such as the United States of America and still be in the bondage and shackles of slavery.

 These Jews, even though they were under Roman occupation and oppression didn't see themselves as slaves.

 **33 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?"**

 To them, Roman rule had just become another form of government.... Even though they were under Roman occupation they still had their own commerce. They owned their own property; for the most part they were free to express themselves however they wished in regards to their religion....

 They paid taxes to Rome much like we pay taxes to our government and they had to live by certain laws just like we have to.....

 They certainly didn't think of themselves as slaves to anyone... In their minds and in their culture they still saw themselves as a free people.

 So Jesus---"How can you say that we shall be set free?"

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

 Real freedom isn't defined by where we are, it is defined by who and what we are.

 **Everyone who sins is a slave to sin.**

 How many times have you heard people say, how many times have you heard Christians say, well, I am human and as a human I will sin...Even as a Christian I will occasionally sin because I still have a sin nature..

 Scripture says:
**James 4:17 (NIV)** **17Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.**

 What we need to realize is this-- If we sin, and we can't help but sin, then we are a sinner and a slave to sin! It still has us mastered!

 Isn't that what slavery is? Not being able to do what you want to do or know that you should do?

 If we don't want to sin but find that we do it anyway then can we really say that we have been freed from sin and that it no longer has mastery over us?

 The word for **free** that Jesus used is:

**1659 eleutheroo {el-yoo-ther-o'-o}**

**1) to make free**

**2) set at liberty: from the dominion of sin**

It comes from the root word:

**1658 eleutheros {el-yoo'-ther-os}**

**1) freeborn**

**1a) in a civil sense, one who is not a slave**

**1b) one who ceases to be a slave, freed, manumitted, exempt, unrestrained, not bound by an obligation**

**3) in an ethical sense: free from the yoke of the Mosaic Law**

 How is the only way that one can be free from the yoke, the burden of the Mosaic law, Gods law to man? To be saved and cleansed by the blood of Jesus and then going ahead breaking the law because we are no longer under its yoke, its authority?

 Church, if it was sin to break Gods law before we came to Christ it is still sin if we break it after we come to Christ!

 We are not freed from the yoke of the law by not having to keep it, we are freed from the yoke of the law by being given the ability to keep it that we didn't have before we came to Christ!

 You see, it is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit of Christ in our life that gives us the ability to do that which we could not do before--- Live up to the letter of the law!

 To obey God! To become Holy just as He is Holy! To live lives free from the bondages of sin!

 Church, this is the freedom that Jesus came to secure for us..

 To not just save us from our past sin but to deliver us from future sinning! He does that by giving us the ability, through the work of the Holy Spirit in our life, to stop sinning! To literally go and sin no more!

Do you really think that Jesus would have told the woman who was caught in the act of adultery to go and sin no more if it would have been impossible for her to do just that? To go and sin no more?

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

**35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.**

**36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**

 Jesus said:

**"If you hold to my teaching,**

**32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

**36 (and) if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**

 So how do we find this freedom that God has for us, that Christ has secured for us?

Jesus said:

"**If you hold to my teaching,**

**Hold= 3306 meno {men'-o}**

**1) to remain, abide, to sojourn, tarry**

**1a2) not to depart**

 It means to be a doer of the Word and not just a hearer of it.

 **Jame 1:23 (NIV) Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror**

**24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.**

**25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.**

 I love bar-b-q. It is right up there with Chicago pizza.

 There is a proper way to eat bar-b-q ribs and it is not with a knife and fork! You dig in and get your hands dirty if you are going to eat bar-b-q ribs correctly. And in the process you might very well get sauce on your face.

 That is why after I am done eating I always go into the restroom at the restaurant to look in the mirror and examine myself.

 Now what if I went and looked into the mirror and saw the bar-b-q sauce all over my face but the instant I turned away from the mirror I forgot that it was there?

 I would walk out of that restroom with bar-b-q sauce all over my face!

 **Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.**

Jesus said:

**"If you hold to my teaching,**

**32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

**36 (and) if the Son sets you free, you will be free \*\*indeed.**

**Indeed= 3689 ontos {on'-toce}**

**1) truly, in reality, in point of fact, as opp. to what is pretended, fictitious, false,**

 If Jesus sets you free then you are truly, in reality, in fact free!

 Church, there are those who live in atheistic, communistic countries where just the profession of their faith in Christ could get them imprisoned or killed that are experiencing a greater degree of freedom than many in America who are lost and being held captive by the bondages of sin.

 Because real freedom is not determined by where we are, what environment that we may be in, it is determined by who we are on the inside.

 Let’s look at a Scriptural example of real freedom:

 **Acts 16:22 (NIV) The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten.**

**23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.**

**24 Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.**

**25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.**

**26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.**

**27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.**

**28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"**

 Paul and Silas where in a Philippian jail because of their profession of Christ, their backs laid open by a whip, shackled in their dungeon cell with chains....

 By all outward appearances they certainly couldn't be looked at as free men...

 But by their actions they showed that they experienced a freedom that almost defies definition.....

 You see they were free on the inside!

 It says that they had been severely flogged. (Cat of nine tails)

 They were in the inner cell (dark damp, no light, a very dreary place) They were in the dungeon of a prison!

 Yet it says that about midnight that they were praying and singing hymns to God!

 How could they, in the condition that they must have been in, be sitting there singing and praising God?

 Because they were really free men, they were free on the inside!

 They had been freed by the blood of Jesus. They had been forgiven their sin and given the ability to go and sin no more! As they surrendered their lives to Christ and were allowing Him to live His life through them they experienced a new found freedom that was not dependent on outside circumstances…

 Regardless of their outward circumstances they were free men on the inside!

 EXAMPLE: The Bible that I use in the jail ministry is called “Free on the inside!” It is a NIrV Bible that has been put together specifically for those who are incarcerated--Prison and jail inmates.

 On the back cover of the Free on the inside Bible it has this inscription:

 *“Freedom from the Bars of prison can get you outside, but it can’t change you on the inside. You know what it is to be bound by bars. But many people, even on the outside, are held prisoner to a life without hope. Perhaps you know what is to be captive to despair. This book offers you a better hope than getting out—the chance to draw near to God and be given a new life through Him. Open this book and you will find there’s only one way to be free on the inside.”*

 And on the inside page there is an excerpt from

**Psalms 107:**

**They lived in the deepest darkness.**

**They suffered as prisoners in iron chains.**

**They tripped and fell and there was no one to help….**

**Then they cried out to the Lord because of their problems.**

**And He saved them from their troubles.**

**He brought them out of the deepest darkness.**

**He broke off their chains.**

**Let them give thanks to the Lord.**

**He breaks down gates that are made of bronze.**

**He cuts through bars that are made of iron.**

**He gave His command and healed them.**

**He saved them from the grave.**

**Give thanks to the Lord, because He is good.**

**His faithful love continues forever.**

**That’s what those who have been set free by the Lord should say.**

 Over the last several years I have had the privilege of sharing the gospel of Christ with many men and women who have been incarcerated, some who have opened their hearts to receive this gospel of hope, and even though they had been stripped of all outward freedom they became truly free on the inside.

 They had allowed God to remove the real shackles of oppression and bondage, the shackles and bondage of a sinful nature and are now living as truly free men and women in the freedom of Christ…

 How about you this morning?

 Have you experienced the real freedom that is not dependent on outside circumstances?

Have you been set free by the truth and by the blood of Jesus Christ?

Are you free on the inside?

 Have you allowed Jesus to come into your heart to be the Lord and Savior of your life, setting you free from the bondage of sin?

 Free from past sins through His forgiveness and freedom from present and future sinning by giving you the ability, through His indwelling Spirit, to actually go and sin no more?

 In your heart of hearts have you resolved to be, not just a hearer of the Word of God but to be a doer of the Word. To hold on to and embrace and surrender yourself to His teachings-- allowing Jesus to set you free on the inside!

 On this national day we celebrate our independence will you embrace an even greater freedom that only Christ can provide as we surrender our life to Him?

R**omans 10:8-10(NIV) That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.**

The Greek for Lord **is Kurios**

**It means Supremacy--supreme in authority**

**Properly, a person exercising *absolute ownership rights*; *lord* (*Lord*).**

**Likewise denotes an *owner* (*master*) exercising full rights of ownership**

  And that is the only place where our real freedom is found...Allowing Jesus Lordship, supremacy of our life. Surrendering our will to His will for us.

Will you make Jesus your Lord today? **If the Son sets you free you will be free indeed!**

**Invitation...**