

Independence Day

John 8:30-36

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." - **John 8:31-32**

Main Point: We can find true freedom and independence in Christ

Introduction: Use the following questions to introduce the topic of discussion -

What is your favorite war or independence themed movie? Why?

When did you feel you first gained independence from your parents? Have you ever had to rely on them again?

This world has a hold on us. We are subject to its rules and the people who make them. But Jesus lets us know we can be independent from what the world says if we trust in the validity of his person and his power. We're bound by guilt and in bondage to addictions, fear, and worry. Wouldn't it be great to have freedom from those things? Jesus shows us some important steps we must take if we're to find independence in this world.

Read John 8:30-36. The first step that leads to independence is:

1) **BELIEF. Refer back to vv. 30-31.**

According to Jesus what makes a person a disciple? What do these disciples receive? (v. 32)

Go back to **John 8:24** and read Jesus' words. What does he indicate is the penalty for unbelief?

Pastor Erik said "Real disciples are *permanent residents* who live under the roof of God and *believe* in His leadership so much they'll follow it." How well do you fit this description? Where might you need to make improvements?

2) **KNOWING THE TRUTH. Read v. 32.**

Have you ever played a game believing the rules you played by were correct only to find out nobody else plays like that? How are the religious leaders falling into that same trap?

Jesus says the truth will set you free. How has the concept of freedom changed for you over time from adolescence to parenthood, to your Christian walk?

What truth did Christ come to represent to a dark and dying world? What does the truth set people free from?

3) **NOT LIVING IN DENIAL. Read vv. 33-36.**

What did the religious leaders believe in for their freedom? How was this faulty reasoning according to Jesus?

What kind of slavery were they subject to? What power did Jesus have to free them?

The Jewish leaders believed they had the key to righteousness with God through following of the 600+ rules they established to avoid the sins laid out in the Torah. But because they had the law and the knowledge of God's truth, yet were trusting in themselves for righteousness, they were more guilty than the gentile world around them. What are you doing in your own power (and to remain **in** power) that you need to give up to God? How has this area of your life become a foothold for the devil from time to time?

Apply It:

Start by confessing to a brother or sister in Christ the things you have denied the Lord in your life. What steps can you take this week to release your rule, and allow Jesus to take control? If you have not confessed with your mouth and believed in your heart (Rom. 10:9) don't delay!

Pray:

Father, we place our trust in you and only you, knowing it's only by grace through faith that we have been saved. Help us believe more than ever in the redemptive power of your Sons name and lead others from darkness into light. In Jesus name, Amen.

Coming up at VillageChurch:

July 1-4: Getaway - Middle School Camp

July 8th: Baptism

July 23-25th: VBS 9a-12p

Aug. 12: VGroup Leader Meeting 11am in the Student Center