Set Free by the Gospel

AS WE GATHER

In Martin Luther's day in the 16th century, the people of Germany rarely heard the Gospel. The Church focused on its power to interpret the Bible and dispense grace. The services were in Latin which few understood, and the rituals confused people. Worse, the Church sold indulgences—teaching people they could 'pay' for their sins. How could people hear the Gospel and be saved by grace through faith?

First Lesson

Revelation 14:6–7

(God sends His messenger angel to proclaim the eternal gospel.)

Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who
dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. 7 And he said with a loud voice,
"Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made
heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

The Epistle

Romans 3:19–28

(The Law condemns sinners. But, the Gospel gives grace through faith for all who trust in Jesus' blood to save them.)

19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every
mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the
law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the
Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who
believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are
justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put
forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness,
because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness
at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

27 Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but
by the law of faith. 28 For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

The Holy Gospel

John 8:31–36

(The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, sets sinners free from the condemnation of the Law.)

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, **"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, [32] and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." [33]** They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never 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 a slave to sin. [35] The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. [36] So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."**

Sermon Summary: Set Free by the Gospel

Based on John 8:31–36 • Rev. Raymond Van Buskirk

In Martin Luther's day in the 16th century, the people of Germany rarely heard the Gospel. The Church focused on its power to interpret the Bible and dispense grace. The services were in Latin which few understood, and the rituals confused people. Worse, the Church sold indulgences—people were told the lie that they could 'pay' for their sins. How could people hear the true Gospel and be saved by grace through faith?

In John 8:31–32, Jesus said, *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* The truth is that we are regenerated by the Gospel. We are lost, condemned sinners before the Gospel sets us free. The Gospel shows the Father's grace in Jesus Christ—that He would pay for our sins on the cross so that everyone who trusts in Him for salvation would have eternal life.

SOLA GRATIA • SOLA FIDE • SOLA SCRIPTURA • SOLUS CHRISTUS • SOLI DEO GLORIA

We are saved by grace through faith in Christ. Faith itself is the free gift of God through hearing the Gospel. The 16th century problem—and even today—is that one cannot abide in the Word about Jesus unless one hears and understands it. In Luther's day, only 2% of Germans knew Latin, and only 13% could read. God sent faithful pastors to preach the Gospel in ways people could understand. Luther preached in their language and translated the Bible into German. As Romans 10:17 says, *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."*

Church services back then were clouded in ritual, superstition, and confusion. Today, people are distracted by media, entertainment, materialism, and earthly pursuits. Many are not hearing the Gospel and remain slaves to sin. That is where we come in. We know the Gospel, and Jesus Christ calls us to share it in words people will understand. By His cross, the Son of God has set you free.

Pastor Raymond Van Buskirk

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