GRAY areas

"You Keep Using That Word. I Don't think It Means What You Think It Means!"

August 17, 2025

Devotions and Notes for August 18-23

Monday, August 18 Read Psalm 119:33-49

Complete individual license results in anarchy where only the strongest and most ruthless dominate. How do good guidelines- limits, if you will- ensure true freedom? How might the psalmist answer that question as regards the commandments and statutes that God sets for us? What does v.45 mean for followers of God?

Tuesday August 19 Read Isaiah 61:1-10

This is one of the Messiah prophecies (see Jesus' use of it in Luke 6). Though Jesus did indeed heal and comfort, what is the larger view of life under God's anointed pictured in this entire passage? What is truly liberating about the vision offered here, not just for the People of God but for each of us as individual disciples? What is being said to your life personally?

Wednesday, August 20 Read John 8:31-43

In this series we've defined "truth" as something we can only under-stand by knowing God and God's Way. Note this doesn't mean we can create truth to suit our own tastes. With that in mind, what does Jesus mean in vv.31-32? How does following Jesus' make us truly free? What are we freed from?

Thursday, August 21 Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-15

There are so many things that enslave us by convincing us they are good or necessary or indispensable. Apparently the church in Corinth understood their freedom in Christ as license to do whatever they wanted, all to their ultimate detriment and damage to their witness. How would Paul define freedom? Slavery? How does the second half of v.13 help us explain these definitions?

Friday, August 22 Read Romans 6:1-14

In a fallen world we are enslaved to the falsely perceived values of ma-terial things, human praise, and our own egos and self-centeredness. Take a moment to reflect on how much energy and resources we di-rect towards achieving these false values, then re-read this passage. In light of these reflections, what is meant by "resurrection (v.5)" and be-ing "crucified with Christ (v.6)?"

Saturday, August 23 Read Galatians 5:1-6

The crisis in Galatia was based on a false understanding that new Christians had to submit to something else first (in this case the laws and rules of Judaism) before they could be considered Christians. What sorts of qualifiers or limitations or doubts do we put on our own discipleship that makes faith limiting rather than liberating? How can we avoid such mistakes?

Sermon Notes

"You Keep Using That Word. I Don't Think It Means What You Think It Means!"

1. Freedom cannot mean doing whatever, as individuals, appeals to our earthly desires.
"I will keep your law continually, forever and ever. I shall walk at liberty, for I have sought Your precepts." -Psalm 119:44-45

2. Christian freedom is lived only in relationship to God which means:
"For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." -Galatians 5:1

   A. Harmony in the Body is maintained and nurtured.
"Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ." -Ephesians 4:12

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

   C. We are freed from the consequences of serving earthly and finite gods.
"We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, so we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin." -Romans 6:6-7

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

PART ONE: FREEDOM IS JUST ANOTHER WORD FOR NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE

1. **Read Psalm 119:33-49 to the group. Share: "**Complete individual license results in anarchy where only the strongest and most ruthless dominate. " Discuss the following:

- *How do good guidelines- limits, if you will- ensure true freedom?*
- *How might the psalmist answer that question as regards the commandments and statutes that God sets for us? What does v.45 mean for followers of God?*

2. Read Galatians 5:1-6 Share: "The crisis in Galatia was based on a false understanding that new Christians had to submit to something else first (in this case the laws and rules of Judaism) before they could be considered Christians." Discuss the following in your group:

- *Sermon note #1 declares that "freedom cannot mean doing whatever, as individuals, appeals to our earthly desires." What is the 'earthly' desire of the Galatians? Why is that hampering their Christian discipleship?*

- *What sorts of qualifiers or limitations or doubts do we put on our own discipleship that makes faith limiting rather than liberating? How can we avoid such mistakes?*

PART TWO: THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

1. **Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-15** Share: "There are so many things that enslave us by convincing us they are good or necessary or indispensable. Apparently the church in Corinth understood their freedom in Christ as license to do whatever they wanted, all to their ultimate detriment and damage to their witness." Answer the following together in your group:

- *How would Paul define freedom? Slavery? How might these definitions be different from the way the secular world defines them?*

- *How does the second half of v.13 help us explain these definitions?*

2. Read John 8:31-43. Sermon Note #2 suggests that "Christian freedom is lived only in relationship to God." If that is true, discuss the impact of the following implications on your daily faith:

- *What "freedoms" must we sacrifice in order to build Christian community (see Ephesians 4:12)? In what ways do these sorts of sacrifices actually make for a better life and more freedom?*

- *Having a purpose or mission by definition puts guidelines on what we do with our lives. What is our primary purpose as Christ's Body? How does that free us from other concerns and demands?*

- *"Do you not know … you are slaves of the one whom you obey?" says Romans 6:16. What are some examples of things to which we can become enslaved? How does discipleship free us from those?*