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SOLI DEO GLORIA
John 8:30-32
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John 8:30-32 'Faith Foundations: -The Word of God'

Freedom. We are citizens of the United States of America. This is the land of the free. Freedom is our flag. It is our identity. We fight for freedom. We honor veterans who defend our freedom. We value our freedom with intensity and passion. But what is freedom? We understand at some base level that freedom is defined by rule of law and governmental action. But law by its very nature, restricts freedom; it cannot produce it. According to law no person is free to steal or murder. The Law cannot create freedom. It can only punish transgressions in an attempt to curb behaviors that limit freedom for those hurt by those transgressions. There is a contradiction between law and freedom. We are not free to drive beyond the speed limit. We are not free to harm our neighbor. We are not free to lie or deceive. So what exactly is freedom? God's Word educates us to the true nature of freedom and how it is preserved.

Jesus said in John 8:30-32, ***"If you continue in My Word you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."*** This is a profound statement. Jesus does not link freedom to governments or rule of law or civil rights or legal protections. Jesus defines freedom in terms of divine truth. Jesus begins this statement declaring freedom with a conditional Law statement. He said, ***"If you continue in My Word."*** To 'continue' in God's Word is to live within the boundaries of God's will; boundaries which establish God-ordained limitations on our freedom. God's Word of Law establishes a standard; it draws a border; it builds a fence. Jesus tells us that anytime we jump this fence we will no longer

experience freedom, but fear of certain eternal judgement. Perhaps this illustration will help. About a half a mile up the road from the church I served in Farmers Retreat was an animal sanctuary dedicated to preserving the endangered Red Wolf. It was called the Red Wolf Sanctuary. (The sanctuary has since moved to larger acreage near Rising Sun, Indiana) The proprietor kept the wolves within a high fenced area around a natural wooded area. The wolves were safe within the boundary of the sanctuary and multiplied. But one day a Red Wolf broke through the fence to roam the countryside. The proprietor searched to capture the wolf following reported sightings in the area. After a week or so the wolf was shot dead by a local farmer. Where was the wolf's freedom? Was it within the sanctuary or outside of it? What looked to be freedom for the wolf ended up in its death. There is no freedom outside of God's Holy Law. When we leave the sanctuary of God's Holy Law we enter the domain of Satan whose only intent is to kill, steal and destroy the people whom God loves. Adam and Eve lived freely within the boundaries of the Garden of Eden. God established the nature of this boundary by placing a fruit tree within the midst of the Garden which He forbade them to eat. To eat that fruit was disobedience to God. It was jumping the fence of his sanctuary. After Adam and Eve ate that forbidden fruit they were banished from freedom in the Garden to a life of struggle and pain ending in death for them and their descendants. God's lesson is crystal clear. True freedom exists only within the boundaries of God's will. Only as we continue in God's Word will we know the truth that makes us free.

The Ten Commandments are the moral law of God. This Law is good by providing the boundaries within which freedom is possible. But sinners do not want to accept these boundaries.

When we believe Satan's lie that true freedom lies outside the boundaries God has established we rebel against God. To the degree that a person, or a nation disobeys God's law that person or nation will experience increasing chaos dominated by fear and increasing conflict experiencing less and less true freedom. When our nation attempts to usurp God's holy law with rebellious laws that murder unborn children, certify same-sex marriage, and reward fiscal irresponsibility there can be no result other than a chaotic society which must increasingly suffer the chaos of its own contradictions. God's Word establishes eternal truths. Only in God's Word will we know the truth that makes us free.

Satan deceives the world encouraging people to rebel against God's Word. Satan plants these seeds in our minds. 'God's Word is a lie.' 'The Church just wants to control you.' 'You will not die if you disobey God's law.' 'If you disobey God you will be free'.' Satan hasn't changed his methods in our day. Many today are of the opinion that a governmental decree has the authority to establish a new moral standard. This is folly. Human laws are valid only as they reinforce God's moral laws. Human laws cannot create a new moral standard any more than they can legislate against the law of gravity. Abortion is evil no matter how many laws are passed to defend its practice. No human legislation can change God's ordinance of marriage as the union of one man and one woman for life. Sin destroys freedom by leading mankind into chaos. Christ has come to set us free from our own self-destruction by His grace to forgive our sin. Jesus said, "***Anyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. If the Son sets you free you are free indeed.***" Jesus illustrated His authority over the curse of sin every time he healed the sick, or fed the hungry, or raised the dead. Jesus declared His authority over sin when He pronounced a lame

man forgiven and telling that man to rise up and walk. On the cross Jesus bore our sins and carried our sorrows to set us free from bondage to sin and death. Christ declared His authority to forgive sin when He rose from the dead and gave us a visible preview of the new life of freedom from sin and death that He gives to all who call upon His name. Christ sets us free by forgiving our sin and giving us new life. It is by faith that we receive His great salvation. And He carries us home to safe enclosure of His holy will to walk by the light of His salvation in obedience to his holy and eternal truth.

As sinners we have known the sorrow of being enslaved by sin. As Christians we also know the joy of being set free from bondage to sin by the forgiving grace of Jesus Christ. This freedom is a gift of God received through faith in Jesus. It is for this freedom that Christ sets us free to live in the joy of His salvation.

We now live in an age in which our nation is forfeiting its freedom by giving itself over to sinful practices. As Christians we must now take a strong stand to live free in Christ in the midst of culture that is increasingly enslaving itself in the chaos of sin. Jesus gives this assurance, ***“If you continue in My Word you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.”*** There are hard times coming for us who confess Jesus as Lord. But be assured of your freedom in Christ’s forgiveness and love and promise to save. Live free in Christ. Publicly confess your faith in Him. Exercise your freedom to worship every Sunday; study God’s Word. Repent and be forgiven; and walk in obedience to God’s laws given to establish us in the joy of Christ’s salvation. Christ has set you free. And if the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed. Amen.