

Freedom as a Disciple

John 8:31-38

A disciple was a student of a rabbi, someone chosen to learn under that rabbi. They would mimic the Rabbi, do everything that the Rabbi would do. A great example of this is a yoke of two oxen placed together. The older experienced ox would be yoked with the young ox while plowing. Jesus uses this example in Matthew 11:28-30 ***“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*** God has created us so that our greatest state of joy and freedom is found in Jesus Christ!

A Disciple Clings to the Word of God (John 8:31) Jesus knew that not all of those who proclaimed Him, truly had born again faith. In this statement, He is saying that those who continue in the Word are His disciples. The word “abide” in this context means to continue in, to hold dear to, to live by. Abiding in God’s Word means that every area of our lives is saturated by the Word of God! Society has become less and less guided by a biblical world view. Only believers cling to the Word of God, as we should. Paul tells Timothy ***“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers that suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”*** (2 Tim 4:3-4) We are clearly seeing this happen. *According to a 2022 Gallup poll, Americans have different views on the Bible, including whether it is the literal word of God, inspired by God, or a collection of human writings: 20% of Americans believe the Bible is the literal word of God, which is half of what Gallup found in 1980 and 1984. 49% of Americans believe the Bible is inspired by God, but not everything in it should be taken literally. This is the most common view in Gallup's history of asking this question. 29% of Americans believe the Bible is a collection of fables, history, and moral precepts recorded by humans.* The Word of God is our absolute standard, and when we deviate from it, we are bound for failure! We see the word abide in two other places that John uses. One is John 15:4-7 ***“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”*** Another passage is 2 John 9 ***“Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.”*** If we are to be free, we must love and long for the Word of God. If you are not a student of God’s Word, I

challenge you to commit to reading and studying God's Word. It is so beneficial. The next passage will show the benefit of clinging to the Word of God.

A Disciple Continues in the Ways of God (John 8:32) There is true freedom when the Word of God becomes nourishment for the person of God through the Holy Spirit power of God. Unfortunately many humans will miss Heaven as a matter of a few inches. There are only a few inches between the head and the heart! The knowledge of Christ is never applied. One never surrenders to Christ! We may know that Jesus is the Savior, yet if a person never surrenders to Him, than they will never become free. True freedom comes from the submission to God's Word by applying God's Ways. When we apply God's Word, it liberates us!

What do we have freedom in or from?

- a. Freedom in God's design for you. (Isaiah 43:7) "everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."
- b. Freedom from the bondage of sin. (Romans 6:18) "and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness."
- c. Freedom from anxiety. (Proverbs 12:25) "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad." God's Word is the source of gladness in the face of anxiety.
- d. Freedom from Hell and eternal separation from God. (1 John 3:5) "You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin."

A Disciple is Committed to Christ, the Will of God (John 8:33-38) Jesus is sharing with them that He is the way to freedom. Isaiah prophesied concerning the Messiah freeing mankind from sin. ***"I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness."*** (Isaiah 42:6-7) The Jewish audience was thinking about physical slavery, but Jesus was referring to spiritual slavery. All without Jesus will never experience true freedom until they surrender to Jesus as their Savior. The Jews were comfortable in their slavery of sin.

I believe Paul experienced true freedom in Christ. Listen to Philippians 1:21 ***"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."*** The greatest enemy to freedom in Christ is comfort! No one in America is trying to kill you for your faith in Christ, yet. So we become comfortable. We get praise, positions, and possessions that paralyze our freedom to live for Christ in which dying is in fact gain. We no longer risk everything for the glory and Kingdom of God because we're no longer free to value Christ above everything! Freedom is when we value Jesus above everything, even above our own life on this side of eternity. Most of us are thinking, what a weirdo, you're right, because we've bought a lie of convenient Christianity, that doesn't give us freedom to live for Jesus! I want to be so radically in love with the Word of God and with Christ that to live is Christ and to die is truly gain!