

Effect of Truth

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John 8: 31-36

Freedom is a prized possession among humans. It seems to almost be an instinctive aspiration of human beings to find and live in a place where freedom can be real. An antithesis to this is the fact that among men there are always some who can't rest if the people have broad freedoms. They scheme and dream of ways to get control of a populace which enjoys too much self-rule, too much freedom of choice, too much opportunity for self-fulfillment and self-expression.

Such men are not found just in our secular governments or sitting on thrones of monarchies, or seated in a dictator's seat, but historically some who would call themselves religious leaders have, in the past, feared for the people to have too many freedoms. They imagined the spiritual masses running amok and getting into all kinds of religious trouble if not held in check by a paternal iron hand which dictated how they should practice religion, how they should live and what they should do. And there was a seed of truth in their fears because religious people who are simply religious are noted for lapses in religious practices.

The children of Israel were famous for wandering off into all kinds of trouble when they were not guarded and were found creating idols and worshiping them, fraternizing with heathens, railing against spiritual leaders, lusting after the things of the world, etc. during such times. By such things they brought themselves more problems and a kind of bondage they would never have had if they had steered clear of such things. It was just this kind of behavior that led to their enslavement by other nations for much of their ancient history that we read about.

If Jesus were to make the same statement to a lot of people on earth today ("If ye continue in my word, *then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*"), they would answer very similarly to these Jews..."we were never under bondage..."

But, despite the claim these Jews made, bondage seems to be the tendency of human societies, while, in a completely contradictory way, freedom appears to be the desiderata, the aspiration and longing of human spirits, and the pride of those who possess it. When we look at how societies or nations drift into bondage, many

times we find out that, if there is no enemy that wages war on them and enslaves them, it is the government of these societies that bring them into bondage.

On the other hand, bondage of self to a multitude of slave masters, is also the tendency of individual human beings, wherever they are found. To this condition, the Savior speaks in our text. To this condition I want to speak.

(Free the Slaves is a modern anti-slavery organization located in Washington D.C. They focus on eradicating slavery and estimate that there are 40 million slaves in the world today. Their slavery count DOES NOT count people who are slaves to an oppressive government...like Cuba, Venezuela, or Red China). And, so that we are clear on freedom vs. slavery, when any people become subject to the demands of another human being, or group of humans, or they become unwilling subjects to the freedom-suppressing demands of a government, (by changing laws, by force, or by power) which wants to take away their freedoms and compel them to go where they do not want to go, culturally or otherwise, they are then under bondage regardless of what the entity pretends to be.

If, as it seems, human beings long for personal freedom, it follows that this human tendency and yearning should lead men to be very ready to recognize a route to freedom when it is revealed to them. But, in reality, there is a strange perversity in men that rejects the absolute route to freedom. There is also a perversity in thinking among humans which imagine that freedom can be found if a government dictates every aspect of the society in which they live.

So, while freedom is greatly desired, we have to confess that men want freedom on their own terms and they cannot recognize or appreciate absolute freedom when it is put before them. For the most part, human nature will not seek freedom through a spiritual process. As with all things spiritual, they will not and cannot receive it. Nevertheless, the offer from God which promises freedom indeed is genuine.

Now, let's look at the message of our text, and note three things about it today:

- 1) This could be a message to nations**
- 2) This could be a message to lost people**
- 3) This IS a message to believers of Christ**

I. This could be a message to nations (there are lots of bible truths which if nations KNOW them and walk in them, they will be free)

- ❖ **Proverbs 14:34** Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people. {to any...: Heb. to nations}
- ❖ **JEREMIAH 5:** (The Lord talks about how he will execute judgment on a nation based on the wickedness and evil activities of people in that nation)
- ❖ But he reminds Israel that if such a nation will repent and honor Him, it will live and prosper:
 - **JEREMIAH 18:**
 - 7 *At what* instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy *it*;
 - 8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.
 - 9 And *at what* instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it*;
 - 10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

II. This could be a message to lost people:

- ❖ Hearing the truth leads men to Christ in the first place:
 - **EPHESIANS 1: 13:** In whom **ye also trusted**, after that ye heard the **word of truth**, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
 - **2 THESSALONIANS 2:13** But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and **belief of the truth**:
 - If you are lost it is a TRUTH that you are under bondage...not free
 - **HEBREWS 5: 14** Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
 - 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were **all their lifetime subject to bondage**.
 - **ROMANS 6:20:** For when ye were the **servants** (Gr. "*doulos*" = *slave*) **of sin**, ye were free from righteousness.
 - **ROMANS 6:16** Know ye not, that to **whom ye yield yourselves servants** ("*doulos*") **to obey, his servants** ("*doulos*") **ye are** to whom ye obey; **whether of sin unto death**, or of obedience unto righteousness?
 - Paul is writing to Galatian believers about the difference between then and now...when they were lost vs. after they were saved **GALATIANS**

4: 3 Even so we, when we were children, were **in bondage** ("doulou") **under the elements of the world:**

III. This IS a message to believers of Christ: V.31: Then Jesus said to those Jews which believed on Him...

- ❖ It has **conditional promise: V.31:** "IF..." (There are over 500 "ifs" in the new testament, more than 1400 in the entire Bible)...many of them set conditions for God's people or for mankind in general).
 - The **condition** set (in our subject text) is **clear: V.31: IF ye continue** in my word (menw meno *men'-o* - a root word; v: AV-abide 61, remain 16, dwell 15, continue 11, tarry 9, endure 3)
 - The **outcome of fulfilling the condition** is clear: v.32: "...ye **shall know the truth** and the **truth shall make you free.**"
- ❖ There is **another condition** in our text: v. 36: "**If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.**"
 - "Indeed" means "really" (truly, verily)
 - Which suggests that people probably imagine themselves to be free like these Pharisees in the crowd did.
 - So, we ask the question: do you believe that you are free? If you do, let's be reminded that true freedom is found in only one place - In Jesus Christ. If He bestows it, you have it. If He has not bestowed it, you are not free (we remind you that people who do not have faith in Christ are under slavery to the world, to the devil, and to fear...and maybe to other things).