

## Why some people never experience freedom.

Last week we talked about getting rid of bad guilt, and every time I speak on dealing with guilt, I always have people contact me the week afterward to ask questions or comment on how God spoke to them through the message. The truth is, God wants to free us from guilt and shame and many other things in life that are keeping us from the life we were created for.

Today, as we continue looking at the Gospel of John, we will look into more ways we can get the freedom God offers us. God wants us to live in light and freedom; to never walk darkness and oppression again.

But before we go on, we need to understand an important principle when dealing with God's freedom. Jesus told us in Matthew 10:34, "***Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! No, I came to bring a sword!***"

You see, while God wants to give us freedom, nowhere in God's Word has Jesus ever made someone who was not right with God... ***feel comfortable***. On the contrary, I have found, when people come face to face with Jesus – there is conflict!

- Conflict in any area of our life where we have become comfortable living opposite of God's will. Conflict arises where freedom is offered.

Today's scripture is a good example of that principle. Jesus is offering freedom to some people... and **He's not around a crowd of people who have never heard of God**. AS A MATTER OF FACT, he's surrounded by very religious people, he's talking to religious leaders in the temple after one of the greatest religious days of the year – the Feast of Tabernacles.

Yet among all these religious people, few are living in God's freedom. Here Jesus is telling church people, "***Guys, if you follow me - the light, you will no longer be living in darkness.***" You'd expect a positive response, right? Wrong, not this group, "The Pharisees looked at Jesus and becoming furious they called him a liar and a bragger..."

In the same way, when Jesus sword of freedom touches your heart, be aware! Your first response may be anger or disbelief.

- **With that in mind, let's read John 8:12-20 NIV, but keep your bible open because we will refer all the way to verse 59 as we listen to how the Jewish leaders react to the freedom Jesus offers.**

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

<sup>13</sup> The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."

<sup>14</sup> Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup> You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. <sup>16</sup> But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. <sup>17</sup> In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. <sup>18</sup> I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."

<sup>19</sup> Then they asked him, "Where is your father?"

"You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also." <sup>20</sup> He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

I had found, **sometimes** the hardest people to present God's freedom to - are religious people.

Not Christian, but a religious person; don't confuse the two.

- A Christian received Jesus by faith and enters into a lifelong process to know Him. We talk about that process ever week!
- A religious person heard about God and made up their own idea of what God wants. They substituted religion – a combination of human-made ideas - with rituals and tradition, and put them in the place of a right relationship with Jesus.

**And in today's scripture, Jesus surrounded by religious people – but not believers. They were masters of the manuscript; experts and teachers of scripture, the people who oversaw the passing of Holy Scripture from generation to the next, yet still denied the Messiah when He came.**

- ***That's the context of today's scripture. Why did they do it? Why did the experts of Scripture reject Jesus? Now here's the four reasons why some people will never experience or even reject the freedom God offers.***

### **1. To begin with, there was a lack of knowledge.**

Verse 14, *"Jesus told the people, 'These claims are valid even though I make them about myself. For I know where I came from and where I am going, [BUT YOU DO NOT KNOW].'"*

Lack of knowledge... You do not know where I come from - **my origin**.  
And you don't know where I am going - **my destiny**."

Now let's drop down to verse 19, here the Pharisees ask, *"Where is your Father? And Jesus answered, you don't know me or my Father, if you knew me you would know my Father."*

**You see these people had no idea of who Jesus was.**

Now this was nothing new to the Israelites. They had been clueless of God and His promises for centuries. ***Go back to book following Daniel, the Book of Hosea, chapter 4.*** The first few verses talk about God accusing Israel of not knowing Him. If you're not familiar with these scriptures, it's found in the Old Testament.

Just looking in verse 1, God is accusing Israel that, *"There is no faithfulness or love in the land, the people don't acknowledge Me as God! And as a result there are broken promises, lying, murder, stealing, and adultery."*

In verse 6, you find something else - when people refuse to acknowledge God and reject the teaching of God, **(The New Living Translation explains it best) "I will forget to bless you and your children."**

***Let me ask you, are you getting into the scriptures?*** Look around, the world is falling into the same rut as it did in the time of Hosea. ***You're either part of the answer or part of the problem in this world of ignorance.***

Once, when Beth and I lived in another community, I remember talking to a neighbor one day, and he told me ***why he did not believe that the bible could ever help anyone.*** He then showed me the lyrics from the cover of a CD and said, "Look, these words are right from the *"Book of Revelation from the bible! See it talks about Icarus, the guy who escaped from the labyrinth with wings made from wax, but he flew to close to the Sun and his wings melted!"* ***How could junk like that ever help anyone!***

I explained to him that he was quoting a story from Greek mythology and not the bible. It's amazing, the reason so many people doubt God or refuse to trust God because they're clueless of who God really is and what the Bible really says about the Lord!

One of the main reasons people never experience the freedom God offers is because they don't know what is offered. We're all either part of the answer, or part of the problem!

## 2. Now the 2<sup>nd</sup> reason is the lack of perception.

In verse 15 Jesus said, "*You judge me with human limitations, but I am not judging anyone.*" When the Pharisee's looked at Jesus, they only saw Joseph's son, the carpenter; the guy who grew up in Nazareth. They didn't have the spiritual discernment to see beneath the flesh and blood, and into the spiritual dimension. They judged Jesus by the wrong standard.

Today, many Christians reject... and never experience the freedom Jesus offers... because they cannot see beyond what's around them. They're totally preoccupied with this world. They don't understand the deeper things in life, like the soul and spirit.

They draw their conclusions of God from media, the internet or what friends tell them. They look at Jesus with a frame of reference that is horizontal rather than vertical. We can find the result in verse 23, "*They are of this world and Jesus is from above.*" **The reason so many people never experience the true freedom that God offers is because they don't believe; they doubt, they lack an eternal perception.**

## 3. The 3<sup>rd</sup> reason many people never experience or even reject the freedom God offers is because of the lack of assimilation – they never made it their own.

In Verse 37, "*Jesus tells the Pharisees that he knows they are Abraham's offspring, yet some of you are trying to kill me, Why? – Because my message does not find a place in your hearts!*" It isn't that they haven't been exposed to God's message, but they never claimed it as their own.

For those Christians who discovered how futile it is to live life on their own, and found the marvelous relationship with God through Jesus Christ. You experienced conversion first hand... for you making scripture personal is not a problem.

But when our children come along, the story is different. They have no memory of life without Jesus... so there's a danger connected with that life. **It's the danger of over-exposure**, our kid's heart can become hard because they hear about Jesus their whole life, but may never make it personal in their heart or life, they can become cynical.

**Here's a good illustration**, in Kalinovka, Russia attendance at a Sunday School picked up after a priest started to hand out candy to the peasant children. One of the most faithful was a heavy set boy who became very good at reciting scripture. By offering candy the priest managed to teach the boy the four gospels and he could recite all four by heart at church.

Over 60 years later the boy died, and on his tombstone appears the name Nikita Khrushchev. The Soviet leader who had been accused of killing hundreds of thousands of citizens and an author of the Cold War. He could quote scripture by heart, but it had no place in his heart.

*Just because someone knows scripture, it doesn't bring them any closer to heaven. Just because my child has a pastor for a dad, it means nothing concerning her eternity - unless she personally appropriates by faith the death, & resurrection of Christ.*

And the reason many people never experience God's freedom is because they had been exposed to the word of God, but they never absorbed it into their life.

#### **4. The final reason many people reject or never experience the freedom God offers is because of the lack of *desire*.**

Verse 44, "*For you are the children of your father the devil and you want to follow your fathers desires. From the very beginning, he was a murderer and has never been on the side of truth, because there is no truth in him.*" Jesus looked deep into the hearts of the Pharisees and said, "The devil is your father, you want **his desire**."

You know what the desire of the devil is? – **Selfishness - I want my way**. Back in the days of Jesus, it was well known that the Pharisees were corrupt, on the outside they looked religious, they followed all the rules... but they manipulated them for personal gain.

Some of us have to admit today, we don't want to follow Jesus too closely; because I know if He comes in, He's going to change my way. He's going to bring a lifestyle where I'm not the center.

- And you're absolutely right, When Jesus comes in, he doesn't join in with the enemy. He comes in to expose and to remove all the fear, anxiety, worry, depression and everything else we want freedom from. That's why Jesus said, "That's why I bring a sword. To cut out all that can separate us from God.

#### **Let's bow our heads.**

Throughout our lives, we feel all bound up, stuck in a whirlwind of a situation or circumstance. We feel our options are used up or we have no control in what is happening around us. Our environment controls all of what we do or act. Then there are times when we only feel like comfortable when we have total control over everything that happens around us. We have to control and manipulate in any way possible.

But all the time Jesus is offering us a solution, a freedom from all that which keeps us bound up or trapped in.

- But we turned away from freedom because we didn't know what was **really** being offered to us. The of lack of knowledge.
- We never understood the gift of freedom, because we judged it according to the world and not by you.
- Then there were the times we rejected your freedom because we never claimed it as our own, it to became a part of us.
- And then out of fear we kept the very freedom at arm's length. We wanted to control, and we had no desire to trust God for the freedom and help we desperately needed.

I have Good News for you. God didn't come to earth just to take care of eternity, He died and was resurrected to give us the freedom and victory in your life today as well as in heaven as a reward. He came so that by having Him in your life, you would receive the freedom you've been looking for and know a control you've never known.

**Jesus just stands and waits for the invitation, the prayer asking Him to come into your life, acknowledge His right to rule in your life totally. Not by force, but by a willing submission of our heart.**