

“The truth about truth”

John 8:31-41

I’m not as free as I think I am.

- I had to be here this morning, else you’d come looking for me.
- I had to mow the grass this weekend.
- I had to put gas in the car.
- I worried about a spot on my skin ... is it cancer?
- I checked to see if I’m saving enough for retirement.
- I had to change my automatic payment to Anthem, ‘cause they increased my rates.

Freedom isn’t the ability to do what you want, how you want, when you want.

KEY POINT: Freedom is the ability to do the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons.

And what is the “right” thing, the “right” way, and the “right” reason? I need truth to know that ... freedom requires truth, doesn’t it?

A. Truth prompts fidelity.

John 8:31-32, Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³² And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Truth prompts us to remain faithful. In fact, I’d go as far to say that there is a direct relationship between the depth of our faith and the degree to which we pursue truth in our lives.

“The teachings” of Jesus are more than clever sayings preserved in a leather bound book ... they are in fact your personal pathway to freedom.

B. Truth reveals the shackles of Sin.

John 8:33-35, “But we are descendants of Abraham,” they said. “We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, ‘You will be set free?’” ³⁴ Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. ³⁵ A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever.

You're not a slave, of course. You are a free person. And the Pharisee's were insulted by Jesus' suggestion that they weren't as free as they thought they were. Of course, the Pharisees conveniently forgot that the children of Abraham were slaves in Egypt, slaves to the Babylonian and Assyrian empires, and at the present time were occupied by the Romans, politically bound to Ceasar.

People *most* shackled by sin are the first to say, "I'm free to do what I want!"

Some common lies we believe that shackle us to our past:

- "It's easier to avoid problems than to deal with them."
- "My worth is determined by my performance."
- "My spouse can and should meet all of my emotional needs."
- "Everything is about me."
- "A good Christian doesn't feel angry, anxious, or depressed."

Let's be honest? Each of us could benefit from more truth, and less pretending.

C. Jesus has the key to true freedom.

John 8:36, So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.

How free do you want to be? Sorta' free? Mostly free? 80% free? Or, put another way ... how long a leash would *you* tolerate? ILLY: adjustable leash. Living "in Christ" removes us from the leash of our self-will and stubborn refusal to follow God.

"Sets you free ..." from what? Yourself! I am my own biggest problem, following Christ gets "me" out of the way.

D. Truth works deep into our hearts.

John 8:37-38, Yes, I realize that you are descendants of Abraham. And yet some of you are trying to kill me because there's no room in your hearts for my message. ³⁸ I am telling you what I saw when I was with my Father. But you are following the advice of your father."

Over the years our closets and cabinets and drawers get cluttered with stuff. Lots and lots of stuff. Stuff that, at one time, was important enough to buy or keep. Our hearts, along the way, collect emotions, ideas, dreams, goals, hopes, memories, promises kept and broken, and so much more. These Pharisees' hearts were so full, that there was no room left for Jesus.

Truth, like the cardiologist's catherization procedure, inserted into our hearts, can unclog all the junk we've kept there for years. Stuff that needs to be discarded to make room for more of God's emotions, ideas, dreams, goals, hopes, and promises kept.

E. Truth isn't negotiable.

John 8:39-41, "Our father is Abraham!" they declared. "No," Jesus replied, "for if you were really the children of Abraham, you would follow his example. ⁴⁰ Instead, you are trying to kill me because I told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham never did such a thing. ⁴¹ No, you are imitating your real father." They replied, "We aren't illegitimate children! God himself is our true Father."

You're entitled to your own opinion, but not your own facts. I have observed that our culture is placing more and more value on personal opinion than objective truth these days. Many people, in fact, outright reject the idea that some things are true no matter what. Everything's up for a vote, and the majority, or a vocal minority, sets what is true and wholesome, and what is not.

The determining factor to truth, Jesus is claiming in this verse, isn't up for a vote, it rests solely on "is it from God" or not. He claimed that no matter how loudly they protested, the Pharisee's views were wrong because they did NOT come from God and Jesus' views were truth because they DID come from God. Jesus told them plainly: "You guys are an imitation of the truth, and I'm the real deal."

It's up to each of us to decide for ourselves what is real and imitation in the area of truth!

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, You are truth spanning the generations and cultures of this world. We pray that You would give us the perception to recognize the lies told by others, or by ourselves, no matter how loudly they're told. Give us courage to adopt truth at every turn, and never to settle for less than Your perfect plan for our lives. In Jesus' name we pray, amen."