

Beulah Baptist Church
Rev. Jerry D. Black, Pastor

Sunday School Lesson
April 24, 2022
Rev. Mark A. Seals, M.Div., Instructor/Teacher

Lesson—Freedom in Christ

Text: John 8:31-38

I. Aim for Change/Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, we will...

1. CONSIDER the double meaning of slavery and freedom in Jesus' conversation with believing Jews;
2. PONDER the many ways people are enslaved in current society; and
3. LIVE in the freedom that Jesus gives to those who follow Him.

Key Verse— *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36, KJV)*

Lesson Song of Praise and Worship: *“I am Free” by Rev. Milton Brunson and the Thompson Community Singers*

II. People Places and Times

The Feast of Tabernacles. Often referred to simply as “the feast,” the Feast of Tabernacles was a seven-day observance that included celebrating the Lord’s protection and providence (Leviticus 23:41; Deuteronomy 16:14). The booths, or “tabernacles,” the feast is named for refer to the tents the Jews construct to live in for the weeklong festival. These tents remind them of their time wandering in the wilderness before coming to the Promised Land.

Background

The tone of the discussion in John 7-8 is somewhat argumentative. Jesus preaches in the Temple area, telling His listeners many abstract theological concepts about Himself and His relation to the Father. The crowd always questions Him, answering Him with confusion or with contradiction. John makes a point of gathering these theological discussions, as Christ explains many concepts to His followers: the glory of God, following Sabbath laws, knowledge of God, the living water of the Spirit, His coming death, true light for the world, standards for judgment, and truth.

III. The Lesson At-A-Glance...

1. Set Free (John 8:31–32)
2. Truly Free (vv. 33–36)
3. Free to Follow (vv. 37–38)

V. In Depth with More Light on the Text

1. Set Free (John 8:31–32) Jesus offered His disciples absolute freedom from the bondage of sin. Those who “abideth” in the teachings of Jesus would know God’s truth. In Christ Jesus lies the power to set people free. His words, “the truth shall make you free” (v. 32), are not a reference to an academically learned truth. It is not education or knowledge that frees us from spiritual bondage. Rather, we are freed by our spirit awakening through the power of Christ.

2. Truly Free (vv. 33–36) Even the Jews who believed in Him did not understand the kind of bondage Jesus was referring to. Any talk of bondage made them recall the experience of their enslaved ancestors. Apart from Christ, no man or woman can boast of being free. According to the Master, anyone who has committed sin is a slave to sin (v. 34). But the power that lies within Him sets us free. Jesus’ mission was to give eternal truth to all people. If we love truth, we love Jesus, the Son of the living God. If we love the Son, we love His Father’s truth. When we accept Him, truth finds a dwelling place in our hearts.

3. Free to Follow (vv. 37–38) The freedom Christ offers releases us from sin’s hold over our actions, but this does not mean we are completely free from all control. We are freed to serve God instead. Jesus already held God’s truth in His heart. Because He knew the truth He was free, certainly free from sin but also free to speak boldly in the face of fierce and mounting opposition.

Liberating Lesson—Coming from a history of enslavement, both legal and socioeconomic freedom are especially important concepts to African Americans. Sadly, many of our people are still enslaved to a life of incarceration, addiction, violence, self-hatred, and poverty. Jesus said that those whom the Son sets free are truly free.

Application for Activation—Examine your own life for ways in which you are still in bondage to sin. List at least one condition from which you wish to be set free. Pray sincerely for God to give you the desire to be led out of bondage from that issue.

Food for Thought and Questions for Consideration (from the Application for Activation)?

1. *What makes you feel free?*
2. *How do you define freedom?*

Vocabulary-New Words

Free: enjoying personal rights or liberty, as a person who is not in slavery: