

What Jesus says about sin

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[0 : 00] Wasn't it good to feel like we have freedom? I was thinking about times in life when I felt free. I was thinking about 18th birthday, when you're legally an adult, legally allowed to do all sorts of things, free from parents, able to go to the pub and buy a drink, able to do all sorts of things.

Isn't it good to feel like we have freedom? Or I was thinking as well, when I pass my driving test, finally, freedom!

I can go out in a car whenever I want and drive without a driving instructor. Freedom! Isn't it good to feel like we have freedom? This is something, the next thing is something I've not done before, but skydiving.

The thought of falling through the air freely may feel like something great to some of us, may feel like freedom.

Isn't it good? No worries, just falling through the air. Other people may think very differently, but that might be some of our idea of freedom.

[1 : 15] Freedom. Or, it's half-term. It's school holidays. Some of us have time off work, some of us have time off school. Freedom, freedom from work and school.

Isn't freedom good? Freedom is something people love. It's something people might chase after. Freedom. And yet, the Bible tells us that we're not really free.

It feels freeing after passing a driving test to think we can drive anywhere I want. But I didn't have a car for a couple of months after I passed mine.

And when I did, I actually felt quite nervous driving on my own. It didn't feel as freeing as I thought it would feel. And I can't just drive 100 miles an hour down London Road if I felt like it.

That's not as freeing as I'd hoped. Or, half-term, you may have time off work or school, but you may have some homework to do. You've got to look after children.

[2 : 24] Not completely free. But the idea of freedom, it does sound fun. It does sound attractive. We want to live in a free and a fair society.

And isn't it great that this passage tells us about freedom? Jesus says the truth will set you free. He says if the Son sets you free, then you're free indeed. Freedom.

It's a wonderful thing. But Jesus says the truth will set you free. We live in a post-modern age. We live in a world that says there is no truth.

So how can the truth set you free? Well, we're looking this morning at what the Bible says is true about us and our world. And I and us as a church here, we're convinced that these things are true. And these things are life-changing. And we see in this passage that everyone is enslaved by sin, but the Son sets us free.

[3 : 30] Everyone is enslaved by sin, but the Son sets us free. None of us are free, truly free, until we find freedom in the Son. So I've got two points this morning to just help us grasp this.

First of all, slaves to sin, and secondly, freedom in the Son. So firstly, slaves to sin. Have a look at verse 34. This is what Jesus says about the human race.

He says, It's like sin holds us in prison or in chains.

It promises us so much, and yet it delivers us so little. We are slaves to sin.

It may hold attraction to us, but we're slaves to it. It's like when I get a tube of Pringles. I only ever eat Pringles when I'm at a party or something, when there's other people around.

[4 : 50] Otherwise, I could sit there and eat a Pringle and then another, and then a kind of stack, and then another stack, and then feel pretty full and gross. But actually, they're really nice.

I'll have more. And I'm kind of in slavery to these Pringles, and then it's empty, and it's disappointing, and it's gone. And I want more, but I shouldn't have more, but I want more, but I don't have any more.

It traps me. Or watching Netflix. You watch your favorite show on Netflix. I don't know what it might be. Stranger Things, The Crown, many other things on Netflix.

And you watch an episode, and then it comes up and says, The next episode's starting five, four, three, two, and then it's like, Yeah, okay, I'll watch another one. And then another one. And then another one.

And so you realize it's gone way past your bedtime. You're going to be really exhausted at work tomorrow. It wasn't as satisfying as you thought it would be. It's kind of enslaved us. It's trapped us. And that's what sin does.

[5 : 51] It enslaves. It traps. It offers us so much freedom and hope and promise. And yet it disappoints. It's the lie that we think will save us so much hassle, but spirals out of control.

And we're trapped by it. Trapped in this lie. And if we say the truth, we're going to be embarrassed to admit that we've been lying. I once phoned in sick to a job I had, a part-time job I had at Primark. I just, I wanted to go to the cinema with some friends that evening rather than go to work. And it wasn't good. So I phoned up, and I felt quite guilty actually then going to the cinema.

And then I was hoping nobody would see me, trying to hide away if anyone from Primark was there. And then I went back to work on the Saturday, and my manager came up to me and said, Ah, you're all better then.

And I was like, oh yes, yes. I was ill, wasn't I? And then I had to sign a form to say how ill I was. It enslaves.

[7 : 05] It traps. Our summer doesn't approve. It's sin in slaves. It traps us. And yet it appears to offer us so much freedom. I thought, great, I can go to the cinema.

But I was trapped by this lie. But you might think, as you're listening to this, as you hear what Jesus says, you might think, actually I'm okay.

Of course I'm not enslaved. Clearly, Daniel, you've got a more guilty conscience than I have. Well, the Jewish people that Jesus was speaking to thought they were okay too, actually.

At the end of the passage that we looked at last week, it said, Even as he spoke, many believed in him. Then we get to verse 31, the next verse.

To the Jews who had believed in him, Jesus said, If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

[8 : 11] He's showing to these Jewish people that their belief in him was a kind of superficial belief. They got caught up in his good teaching. He's an influential man with bold claims.

And so they're saying, yeah, we'll follow him for a bit. But belief in him, Jesus says, is about holding to the truth, holding to his words, continuing to believe, remaining in him, keep believing in him.

About six weeks or so, the Conservative Party elected Liz Truss to be their leader. Some people believed in her and what she was going to do.

And six weeks later, it seems that belief in her has gone. And there's a new leader coming. They didn't keep believing in her so that she couldn't carry on.

And Jesus says to us, we need to keep believing in him. Keep holding to him and his truth. Don't just follow me for a few minutes because you like one thing I said.

[9 : 18] And he goes further than this. He says, if you believe in me, then you know the truth.

The truth is both Jesus' teaching and Jesus himself. John says that he's the one who comes full of grace and truth. Jesus says elsewhere, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

What he says are words of truth. Words of truth from the Father. He speaks nothing of his own accord. This is God in the flesh speaking the true and trustworthy words of God himself.

Jesus is truth. He is the way, the truth, the life. And so it's by believing in Jesus and his words of truth that will set us free.

That's what Jesus says. But we move into verse 33. And the Jewish people respond. They say, they answered him saying, we are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone.

[10 : 31] How can you say that we shall be set free? They thought they were okay. They were descendants of Abraham. Abraham.

Abraham, the man who God chose out of all the world to give his big promises of salvation and blessing for the whole world.

And because these Jewish people can trace their ancestry back to this man, Abraham, they thought, well, of course they're okay. Of course we're okay.

Our ancestry shows us that we're okay. And what is more, they are clearly very committed Christians because they're at this feast, this festival of tabernacles.

They're totally committed Jewish people. And so they said, we're not slaves to anyone. Why would we need to be set free? Why are you saying this to us?

[11:26] Why would we need to be set free?

Jesus knows the human heart. He knows that the heart is deceitful above all things. He knows that humans are naturally sinful.

Sin is the master that controls them. Maybe you sit here and you think about your family background.

You think about how good and wonderful they are. I'm of the right family. They're good, God-fearing churchgoers. And so I'm fine then.

Maybe they weren't particularly Christian, but you see that they're good people. And you're from a good family. You're fine, you think.

[12:48] Or maybe you think about all that you do for church. Maybe you realize you're part of Calvary Church. We're good here.

And I do all sorts of things for the church. Of course I'm fine. Of course I'm fine. Jesus says everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

It's not about our backgrounds. It's not what we've done. It's not what our church is like. If we sin, we're slaves to sin.

We see that their belief in Jesus, these Jewish people, their belief in Jesus is rather superficial. We've been seeing that and we see that even more. Verse 37. I know, Jesus says, I know you are Abraham's descendants. He acknowledges that. They are. That's true. But yet you are looking for a way to kill me because you have no room for my words.

[13:53] He shows their sin, their sinful hearts. They want Jesus dead. They have no room for the Lord Jesus. And everyone else who sins.

When we sin, we're saying, we're believing we don't have room for Jesus in this moment. We're going to do this. We're going to go away from Jesus and we're going to do what we want to do. Everyone who sins is a slave to sin. And so Jesus says, you need to hear the truth. Verse 32. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. We need to hear Jesus' words of truth. Of truth about our sin.

The truth that sets us free. Free from this slavery of sin. Whoever you are, whether you're a descendant of Abraham, a member of Calvary Church, an agnostic, an atheist, whoever you are.

[15:01] Man, woman, boy, girl. You sin. And everyone who sins is a slave to sin. That's what Jesus says. Whether you say a little lie or you steal a pen from work or you get drunk.

Whatever sin it is, we're slaves to sin. But does that matter? You might be thinking. If everyone is a slave to sin.

If everyone sins. Does that really matter? Can it really be that bad? Verse 35. Jesus talks about a slave.

He says a slave has no permanent place in a family. He's talking of a house and the family that live there.

They employ a slave staff to do their work. And no matter how close the relationship that family may have with that slave.

[16:11] No matter how good and valued the work they do. They're not part of that family. No matter how much time they spend in the home.

They may even live there. They're a slave. Of slavery to sin. J.C. Ryle, an old bishop of Liverpool, says this.

And I think it's really helpful. There is no slavery like this. Sin is indeed the hardest of all taskmasters.

There is misery and disappointment by the way. Despair and hell in the end. These are the only wages that sin pays to its servants.

That's what it's like being a slave to sin. There is no slavery like this. But Jesus says something else. He says a son belongs to it forever.

[17:09] A son belongs to the family forever. They have a place. Even if they move away from the family, they have a place.

They're part of that family forever. Even though I live in Brighton. Even though I live in the home of Phil and Maria.

I'm still a chapeler. My dad is Stephen. My mom is Dawn. I'm the brother of James. And I'm part of that family forever.

That does not change. And that's what Jesus says. A son belongs to that family forever.

Verse 35 is interesting. Some of our versions. Mine says a son. Others may say the son. And I think the son seems to be the right translation.

[18 : 06] Because it's talking about Jesus. Jesus is talking about him being the son of God. The son who has a permanent place in God's family.

And a slave does not have that permanent place in God's family. And if we remain in that way. Our lives continue that way.

As we saw from that J.C. Ryle quote. It's hell and destruction in the end. But Jesus, the son of God. He was put to death in our place.

In the place of sinful people. In the place of slaves to sin. And he's alive. And remains alive forever. As the son of God.

And if we look to him. We can be saved. We can find a permanent place in him. Being adopted into the family of God.

[19 : 08] Because of what the son of God has done. Because Jesus is the living God. And he can make us free.

Free from the slavery of sin. The chains that it holds us in. And so that moves us on to our second point.

Freedom. Freedom in the son. Isn't it good to have freedom? And that freedom that we need. The only freedom we can really have. Is found in the son of God.

The Lord Jesus. Jesus. So it's only the son who belongs to the family forever. So we need to find our freedom in him.

Verse 36 says this. So if the son sets you free. You will be free indeed. That's good news for us to hear this morning.

[20 : 06] From the son of God. He tells us if the son sets you free. You will be free indeed. They are marvelous words for us to hear this morning.

Really, really good news. Here in this verse he builds upon what he said in verse 32. About the truth setting us free.

It is by trusting in Jesus. The true son of God. Who comes to set us free. Free from the power of sin. That has been at work in us.

When we do that. When we trust in him. To set us free. We become children of God. John's gospel. The first chapter of John.

Said this. Yet to all who did receive him. To those who believed in his name. He gave the right to become children of God. Children born not of natural descent.

[21 : 06] Nor of human decision. Or a husband's will. But born of God. Through Jesus we become children of God. Born of God.

Therefore no longer a slave to sin. But a child of God. For the rest of God. For the rest of God. For the rest of God. I really love the story of Paddington Bear.

It's the story of a bear born in deepest, darkest Peru. He lived with his aunt Lucy and his uncle. Whose name I've forgotten.

And they were visited by an explorer from London. Who told them about how wonderful life in London would be. How polite people would be.

And you must come to London because a warm welcome awaits you there. And so in the story of Paddington. This little bear. He somehow manages to get to London.

[22 : 06] And turns up at Paddington Station. And he doesn't discover a warm welcome awaiting him at all. And he's left alone. And disappointed at Paddington Station.

London wasn't this wonderful place that was promised. People ignored him. Shoved him. Pushed him. Great disappointment to him.

Until the Brown family come and discover him. And they kind of reluctantly take him in at first. But they take him in. Eventually he stays. And he becomes part of their family.

And it means he can enjoy life in London as part of a family. His place there is secure. He has a home there. Even though maybe not everyone is welcoming to him.

In our world it's full of slaves to sin. People are under a cruel taskmaster.

[23 : 13] It may seem good at times. It may offer us so much promise. But sin leaves us empty. And it leaves us without hope. But God in his mercy delights to welcome us in as part of his family.

And that is a good and a secure place to be. He makes us children of God. God in his mercy. A slave has no permanent place in the family.

But a son belongs to it forever. When we become Christians, our lives are united to Jesus Christ.

The son of God. With sons and daughters of God.

A high and privileged position. Available to anyone who comes to believe in Jesus. For Jesus to set me free.

I have to say that I'm a slave to sin. I have to say that on my own I'm not acceptable. I have to say that my family background. My status in the world.

[24 : 16] The work that I do. None of it sets me free. I'm still a slave to sin. If I remain in that and don't trust in Jesus. I can't have real freedom until I see that truth.

That I am a slave to sin. And that on my own I'll die in my sin. For Jesus to set me free.

We have to say that Jesus is more than just a good teacher. Who lived 2,000 years ago. That he is this true eternal son of God.

Who's come to rescue me out of slavery to sin. And bring us to new life forever with God. With Jesus things change.

The son sets us free. And in him we are free indeed. Free from the chains of sin that enslaves us. And this makes all the difference in the world.

[25 : 19] It provides us with a permanent place. In the family of God. Our world calls people to find their identity.

Often to deal with our sexuality. Discover that and then you'll know freedom. But as Christians. Our identity is as loved children of God.

Loved sons and daughters of God. Once slaves to sin. Now loved and secure in him forever. Isn't it good. To have freedom.

Freedom in the son. That freedom from sin. That I've been speaking of. That we have in Jesus.

We may just be tempted as we hear this. To think that that's a license for me to then go on and sin. We may think.

[26 : 21] Oh okay. We're free. We're free in the son. So it's okay that I. I. Say that little light. It's okay that I claim a bit more on my expenses. It's okay that I watch that.

That thing on my computer. That I know I shouldn't. But God does forgive us. He does. And it's wonderful and it's gracious. That doesn't mean we're excused to go on and sin.

Sin is serious. It costs Jesus his life. True freedom in Jesus is freedom to do what we ought to do.

To live as God intended us to live. In a right relationship with him. You see to have freedom after passing a driving test.

I mentioned that earlier. You're free to drive. But you're free to drive within the laws of the road. And if you do that. It will be great. If you don't.

[27 : 20] It could lead to nasty consequences. To fines. To accidents. But providing you obey those laws. You're free to drive wherever you like. And it's the same with a relationship with God.

We're not an excuse to just go and sin as we please. But to follow God and his ways. To live in the freedom. Of a relationship with him.

Which is what we were created for. At the beginning of time. But on the opposite side of that.

Maybe. Maybe some of us struggle with the guilt of sin.

Struggle with sins. Maybe long in the past. Maybe we're anxious as to whether God really does love us. Can God keep loving us?

Keep sinning? But in Jesus we're set free from condemnation. Free from the judgment of sin. We no more need to fear death.

[28 : 26] We no longer need to fear hell. And it's all because of Jesus who sets us free. Our sins are removed. Last Sunday evening if you were here at communion.

We looked at some wonderful verses in Psalm 103. As far as the east is from the west. So far has he removed our sins from us.

That is good news. As we sung earlier. If we're tempted to despair. Of the guilt within. Upward we look and we see him there.

Who's made an end of all my sin. Who sets us free from sin. Because the sinful saviour died. My sinful soul is counted free.

For God the just is satisfied. To look on him and pardon me. That is good news for us to rest in.
[29 : 21] When we're feeling the guilt of sin. And so if we're feeling that guilt. We need to hear those words of Jesus afresh.

In verse 36. If the son sets you free. Then you are free indeed. We can live in that. We can rest in that.

I started by saying how good it is that we have freedom. To have freedom. It's a great feeling. But it won't come from us.

From anything in our world. Even from an 18th birthday. Or passing a driving test. Or I can't remember the other. Skydiving. Half term break.

Or anything else that you could think of. Sin still enslaves us. It tempts us.

[30 : 19] And it promises so much. And yet delivers us so little. And everyone who sins. Jesus says is a slave to sin.

But only Jesus. The true son of God. Sets us free. And if we're free in him. Then we are free indeed. It's good to have freedom. It is good to have freedom. It's especially good. If we find it in the one who truly gives freedom. And that's Jesus.

Let's pray. Father we thank you. For what we've seen in your word this morning. We thank you.

That Jesus hasn't left us in slavery to sin. But that he. Went all the way to the cross. To take our sin on himself.

[31 : 20] In order. That we can be set free. From that slavery of sin. We thank you.

That in him our chains. Are gone. Our hearts are new. Help us to go forth. And follow you we pray. In Jesus name we ask.

Amen. Amen. Amen.