

Finding Freedom

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[0:00] Go to James if you've got your Bibles, but we're going to project the Scriptures anyway.

! Our theme today is finding freedom. Finding freedom.! And we're running a course, as we know, about finding freedom. And freedom is a very critical biblical concept.

And it's more than just a concept that we talk about. It's something we can realise, we can experience personally. Something we can know. Someone we can know.

That's what it is. Freedom. Freedom. And this word, the Bible, contrasts freedom with bondage. So I'm talking on this theme in general today.

And some of it you might have seen some object lessons I've used before. But this concept of freedom, I think it's very fundamental. It's very fundamental. And people are crying out for it. People are crying out for freedom.

[1:08] And this book tells us of captivity and of liberation. Of traps. And of setting free. Now here we have a trap.

A mouse trap. A mouse trap. And the trap has a lure inside it. A bait. Mice like peanut butter. And they just love peanut butter. They can smell it. And they smell it. And they smell it. And they see it. And they go in. And they can't get out. They're trapped. And sin is a bit like that.

It's a bit like a trap. I'm just going to make some space here. Because I'm maybe putting some little things on. And we're talking about today. So we're talking about traps.

They're attractive. That's the way they work. Like a fly drawn to the web. Like the moth taken by the bug zapper.

[2:14] Bang. Gone. Like the mouse taken by the tasty mousetrap. Like the butterfly taken by the net. Like the fish taken by the bright lure.

The shining lure. Like a bird taken by a cunning snare. People get trapped. They get trapped. They can't find a way out.

A way of escape. That is just how the destructive power of sin works. Man is taken by temptation as he yields to it. You see that in this scripture.

Go to James 1. James 1. James 1.

Verse 14. It says this. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Now it's interesting this word enticed has the underlying word of the bait.

[3:16] Of like fish bait. It's the fish. It's that little wriggly worm. And that just attracts them and then chomp. They're hooked. And sin is like this tempting.

Tempting. Where a man is drawn away of his own lust. He's enticed. Just like the bait catches the fish.

Now the bait can't hurt you if you don't bite. But when you're enticed it says then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin.

And sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. So there's a kind of process here. A stepping through. Temptation yielded to is sin and it brings death.

And then we see death is speaking of the damnation really isn't it? And Spurgeon commenting on this verse he talks about how first you see the egg.

[4:22] Then the larvae. Then the full grown fly of sin. The egg, the larvae, then the fly. Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.

It's been said that sin will take you further than you want to go. Keep you longer than you want to stay. And cost you more than you want to pay.

I believe in a death defying faith. It is possible to find freedom. To defeat death, sin, hell and the devil.

And we can short circuit that power of sin. By God's help. Of course Christians still struggle with sin. It's not to say we don't sin. But we can find victory.

We can find freedom in Christ. We can find God's help and hope and victory. And ultimate freedom. Ultimate freedom. And there is a way. So let's talk about sin.

[5:29] Let's talk about this freedom that we can find. Now we saw there that man has this lust problem.

And it brings forth sin. It's desires bring forth sin. And it brings forth death. And it starts, it says, when every man is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.

Now here to demonstrate that, I have a magnet here. Some of you kids might want to watch this one. See what happens when the magnet goes over the metal. It's drawn away.

Look at that. It's drawn away. Magnet goes over the metal. Drawn away. Just like sin, isn't it?

Sin draws us like a magnet. It's got this magnetic power. And it's like there's some overpowering magnetic attraction that takes control.

[6:32] Some powerful force that takes over. And friends, it starts with a look. We see that right back in Genesis. What was the main starting point?

It says, when the woman saw the fruit of the tree. She saw it. Look good. Oh, that looks tasty. That looks shiny.

And hmm, that might be something to have a chomp of. That fruit that God said, don't go near it. Don't take of it. Don't eat it. And she saw it. And she took of it.

Achan is another example. He took the plunder, the materials that belonged to the idol nation that God had said to destroy.

And he took them and he hid them. He saw them and he took them. Achan saw them and he took them. And then David saw this woman bathing on the housetop, another man's wife.

[7:33] He saw the woman and he took her. For himself. Now, Samson is another example. Samson was taken. Samson was this man made powerful by God.

He was taken by Delilah. And it started in the warm, cosy, little, huggy, cuddly, charming, soothing. I imagine she was stroking his hair and maybe rubbing his back and whispering in his ear.

And just sort of maybe she was cradling him in her arms. And maybe she was overwhelming him with her perfume. As he lay in her lap, he succumbed to her charms.

Started innocently enough. Just, it was probably very pleasant in Delilah's arms. But, of course, we know the story goes that she elicited from him the source of his strength, which was really the hair which reflected his commitment to God, his devotion to God.

And it says, what happened next? The Philistines took him. They put out his eyes. They gouged out his eyes. And they brought him down to Gaza.

[8:49] And they bound him with fetters of brass. Sorry, it's a bit violent. It's a bit MA this term. They pulled out his eyes. And they bound him with fetters of brass. You know, these aren't fetters of brass.

But, you know, they bound him up. He was chained. He was a prisoner. And then it says he was grinding in the prison house. And someone's reflected on this sermon how sin will blind you, bind you, and grind you.

It's true, isn't it? It's what sin does. Blinds us. Can't see God. Truth. Hope. Binds us.

We're confined, constrained, imprisoned, entangled, captive. And it will grind you. Life will just be a grind.

As Samson was grinding with the millstone in the slavery that he was taken to. Friends, that's what sin will do for you.

[9:51] It all starts in Delilah's little cozy embrace. The devil wants to take your freedom, people. He wants you to be a worshipper of idols.

Anything but God. And he wants to make you a slave to your lusts. And affections. Now, there was a man who was on a diet. And look, I can identify.

I probably need to be on one. There was a man who was on a diet. And he thought that, and he was struggling. It was tempting. You know, there's temptation there.

And as he went downtown. Now, he was a Christian, this man. And as he started out, he remembered that his route would take him past the donut shop. Oh, can't you just, doesn't that

make you hungry?

The donut shop. Here he was. He was driving along. And he thought, oh, I'm going to go past that donut shop. But I know that's temptation for me. And as he thought, he thought about it. Maybe a cup of coffee would hit the spot.

[10:47] But he remembered, oh, my diet. And that's when he prayed. You know, he's a very spiritual man. He prayed, Lord, if you want me to stop by for a donut and a coffee, let there be a parking place in front of the shop.

Now, later on, he said, sure enough, I found a parking place right in front on my seventh time around the block. You know, we can be like that, can't we?

We try to resist temptation, but we fall for it, don't we? And of course, this is just a light example. But it happens in deeper things, does it not?

And people know that temptation is bad, but there's this craving that takes over, like that sugar addiction, you know, like chocolate, you know. You get a family bar and you just can't stop it a few blocks.

You've got to have the whole block, don't you? Well, that's me. That's my confession this morning. But that craving takes over, doesn't it? Temptation, that craving, that lusting, that desire. And sometimes people are slaves, they're trapped.

[11:53] They're trapped. And it's funny that people can be slaves without even realising it. There's this strange syndrome. You might have heard of this one.

It's kind of an unusual. Here's your psychology lesson this morning. It's a strange condition called the Stockholm Syndrome. Who's heard of that? Yeah, the Stockholm Syndrome.

And apparently it's when hostages develop a psychological alliance with their captors during their captivity. So in 1973 there was four hostages that were taken at a bank robbery.

And the bank robbers took these four hostages in Stockholm in Sweden. And the hostages defended their captors after being released and would not agree to testify in court against them. It's like the ones who captured them, who kidnapped them, they actually started to get to know them, they talked with them, they chatted with them, they heard about their cause, they heard about their lot in life, and they started to become friendly with them such that they didn't want to testify against them later when it came to court.

[13:04] And doesn't that sound a bit like how some people strangely get to like serving the devil? Isn't that so? Some people they actually think the devil's their friend, that the devil's going to give them a good time, that one day they can party with him in hell maybe, and that there's strange liking for this slave master, even though he has them in the grip of his hands, and he wants their hurt.

And he so deceives them so that they think he is a friend to them. The Bible talks about seducing spirits. We can get so conned, you know, I hope there's no used car salesman present, but, you know, I've been conned.

Bought a lemon and they're so smooth talking, no reflection on any car salesman present, but there's that seducing, isn't there? We just get conned, oh, yes.

And the first look, it looks great, still you start to drive it and work out what's wrong with it. And our enemy, friends, he's a master of deception. He's a master con artist.

He's a deceiver, a seducer. And you need to open your eyes and see the work of the enemy. It's all around us. Sometimes we're not even conscious. And, friends, sin is a slavery, but there is a setting free.

[14:26] That's what I want to talk about today. And there's a psalm of David that's called a prayer when he was in the cave. And it says this, Psalm 142, Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name.

The righteous shall compass me about, for thou shalt deal bountifully with me. There's many scriptures that talk on this theme of freedom, of setting free. And the Lord can bring our soul out of prison, out of the prison house.

And we can declare, as people released from prison, God's saving power, can't we? I'm free. I'm free. Free from the power of sin. Free from the penalty of sin.

Free from the bondage of sin. Free from the burden of sin. Free from the guilt of sin. Free to live my life for my God. Free to praise his name.

My great deliverer. And this freedom is such, we want to tell others about him and proclaim that liberty. Liberty to the captives. It's the gospel. As it was given in Isaiah 61, which our Lord recounted and fulfilled.

[15:34] The spirit of the Lord is upon me. The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

The gospel delivers people. That's the ultimate. I know with our freedom from addiction course, really the ultimate is the freedom that Christ gives. Ultimately and absolutely.

And we want to announce the great glad tidings of the gospel. We must. How can we be free? He brings us out. He brings us out. As we see, as the people of God left Egypt, the Lord says, Exodus 20 verse 2, I am the Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

He's taken us out of slavery. And what a setting free that is. And how does it happen? At salvation. That's the freedom point. That's the freedom solution for our soul.

Salvation. As we trust in the saviour, he sets us free. He takes our guilt, our shame. He gives us total liberty. He sets our heart free. And once we are saved, we see the misery of what we left behind.

[16:57] We don't want, we don't hanker after Egypt anymore. We realise for Egypt, for what it was. It was awful. And we develop a distaste for it. Friends, there's a sense when, as a Christian, you start to actually hate some things.

This might sound a bit, oh, well, we're about love here, aren't we? Yeah, but there's actually some hate. There's some good hate. Because the Bible says this, it says the fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

Hate it. Pride and arrogancy and the evil way and the froward mouth, which means a perverse mouth, do I hate. It's a good thing to hate some things.

And when you actually think, now, I must confess, I watched a war movie lately. And the enemy was portrayed as a malevolent dictator, an evil despot.

And he did some drastic, dastardly things. And the point that the movie was making was actually, he's a malevolent enemy.

[18:02] And he deserves hatred. And friends, the one we're speaking of today is the enemy of our soul. He is hateful.

We should hate evil. We should hate evil, pride, arrogancy. We should hate the devil. We should hate the evil way. There is such a thing as a kind of holy hatred.

We see it for what it is, for what it was, for where we were, for what he's done for us, what he's done against us. And we hear the heart of God. We see what hurts the heart of God.

So we hate that too. We hate what God hates. We see the enemy that he's a dastardly creature. He's intent on our destruction. He's malevolent. He's full of evil.

And if we can just grasp that concept, we should hate the evil. We should hate the devil. We should hate his works. And we should be engaged in a spiritual combat and mount our assault against him and his works.

[19:07] I mean, we could reflect. And again, I'm showing my carnal appetites here. But, you know, when you see some movies which show someone parachuting into a prisoner of war camp, and then getting the prisoners out.

I mean, that's what Jesus has done, isn't it? He's gone right into the enemy territory, right into the prisoner of war camp, and he's taken us and set us free. There's lots of pictures you could paint of such a thing.

That's what our Lord has done for us. He's the ultimate saviour. And yet sometimes we're kind of guilty of this syndrome where we actually think the devil is fun and good.

It's nice. It's attractive. It's pleasant. It feels good. But really, we need to tear those dearest idols from our heart that take his place and let our heart become his throne, the throne of God.

And our liberty, our true liberty, comes from the word, by his word. And we can recognise the enemy's works and refuse them. Now, I need a young fella who's just really itching to volunteer and help me.

[20:23] Oh, I see that hand. Now, Lin Tong, he's a fine gentleman here, but Lin Tong's had no, he's had, we're just going to try to capture the sound. Maybe he'll come over here.

Sorry about this. You just stand there and we're going to do something to you in a minute. Yeah, just stand a bit here. It's okay, Dad. Now, Lin Tong knows absolutely nothing what I'm going to do to him right now, but I'm just going to use him, and I saw my dad demonstrate this.

This is like, I think it's a bit of a preview of what's going to be happening in the addictions course. But the first thing we'd like to notice here is a foothold.

Okay, so I'm going to grab Lin Tong's feet and he's going to try to walk away. Okay. I've got more for you.

Now, that's a foothold. That's a foothold. And the Bible says, neither give place to the devil. Don't give him a foothold, right? Neither give place to the devil. That's the starting point.

[21:28] You get a foothold, you start to toy and play with evil. You start to kind of go, oh, it's just a little bit of sin, or just a little bit of fun.

It's maybe something that's not really godly for me to do. And it gets, the devil gets a foothold. Don't give him, don't give him an inch is the sense of it. A foothold, right? Secondly, a stronghold.

All right. How to escape. Oh, he's stronger than I thought he was. Okay. Now, the second one here is a stronghold. A stronghold, right?

A stronghold. In 2 Corinthians 10, 4, it says that for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Now, we can get a stronghold in our life, can't we?

Where the devil gets us and he's holding us tight and he's holding us so we're feeling constrained, constricted, we're feeling captive and he's got a stronghold over our life.

[22:28] Maybe a stronghold could be where you've got something that you know is sin, but you just keep doing it. It's a stronghold. In your mind. Right? And then, now lastly, this will finish him off now.

Just get ready for it. It's a stranglehold. A stranglehold. Okay? A stranglehold. Round his neck. That's what the devil wants to do.

Give you a foothold, a stronghold and then a stranglehold. Thanks, Lingtong. Let's give him a hand. Stranglehold. You'll know next time not to sit near the front because you get picked up.

Stranglehold. In Mark 4 verse 19, it talks about choking the word. The devil wants to choke you. He wants to choke the spiritual life out of you to stop you having the word of God, to take out the spiritual life that you have and that can be a stranglehold.

I'm trying to make the point that it's kind of a progression if you like. The foothold, oh, it's just a little bit of sin. I'll just give an inch or two and before you know it, there's a stronghold, you're captive in your mind and then a choke, a chokehold, a stranglehold.

[23:39] It gets hold of you. That's the point I'm trying to make is you've got to be careful about these things, brothers and sisters and get our heart in tune, in tune with the heart of God.

He changes our hearts and minds and he gives us a new way of walking. We see many scriptures along this theme. I will walk at liberty for I seek thy precepts. You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

The law of God is in his heart. None of his steps shall slide. There's a wonderful freedom when we walk in the word, when we walk in that liberty that is in Christ to save people. We've got a joyful liberty.

This is not a religion that confines and binds. It's a setting free by the power of God. It's knowing our saviour and his purpose and it's knowing the truth and the truth makes men free and the heart of God is in our heart.

The law of God is in our heart and our steps shall not slide. What a wonderful freedom we can know, truly. And we can be set free.

[24:42] We can hold steady even when others are sliding. The picture there is sliding. You ever been on a sliding, slippery slope and you end up, you lose your traction.

Our steps can be walking in the light, steady, and we can know God's word. And friends, just when you think about it, people have got this addiction to movies and that.

This is the, there is a movie called, this isn't it, the greatest story ever told. Nothing beats the Bible, really. If you've got time to read something, read this. It's got, it's filled with an epic battle between forces of evil and the ultimate and gracious God.

It's a tear-jerking love story. It's a world-shaking drama of truth versus lies. It's the story of a prodigal world in rebellion and of a gracious pardon. It's the greatest escape story.

Who likes escape stories? This is the greatest escape story, isn't it? And we hear of a dread affliction and of a healing and of a dire imprisonment and a setting free.

[25:53] And most of all, there's a key of liberty here. It tells us of the Bible. It's the perfect law of liberty. It's a wonderful setting free that we can know the one who's written this book for you and me.

And it tells us of a glorious liberty. It says in Romans 8, 21, he's delivered us from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And when you think about it, we've got the greatest story ever told, the greatest saviour, the only saviour that our world needs to hear about and he's given us a glorious liberty such that we serve him not because we're under some constraint or some religious kind of binding of us, but it's absolutely, a total setting free of us.

We're free to be a servant of the Lord. And it's the liberty that children have. Think of children, they can freely come to their father and know that closeness of love and care. And if the child goes to the father, he won't turn them away.

There's a glorious liberty there. And we see that this liberty is by the spirit of the Lord. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. He affects this liberty by the spirit of God, his very power.

[27:10] It's God's work, that's the point. And we're commanded to stand fast in this liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. Friends, think of this great salvation that we have, that we know, that message, that gospel.

This liberty is wherever it's preached. And we can know a great liberator. You know, you see stories in world war times when the occupied territory is retaken as the forces of good, I'm trying to think of the word, as in the armies, the liberating army marches in.

There's great fanfare and celebration. There's great triumph as the occupying force, the malevolent enemy who'd overtaken that nation is deposed and we see the wondrous victory as the liberators come in.

We know the liberator, the liberator. We're not talking about some kind of communist revolution. We're talking about a Jesus revolution, the great liberator of our soul.

God, and his very power, his spirit affects that and we stand fast in that, that liberty that's in Christ. And he says to us, if the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

[28:39] Think of that. This freedom that we have, it's not some freedom that's conceptual or just a philosophical concept. It's true freedom. We can be truly free, free indeed.

And think of this freedom that you have. As brothers and sisters in Christ today, we have a true freedom. This is not some cultic kind of bondage. We're free, as Brother Neil said, free to come to the very throne of grace, free to come into the very holy of holies, free to come to our heavenly Father and bring our prayers to him.

And we've got a glorious deliverance. Notice what it says here. It contrasts the miry clay, the horrible pit. It says, he brought me up, also out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay.

He set my feet upon a rock and established my goings. What a picture that is. Do you want to go and wallow in the muck and mire, the miry stinky clay? Or do you want to be on the rock?

And of course, the Lord Jesus is the rock. And it says, what a picture of that, of God saving us and of where we are now. It boils down to two things.

[29:46] It says, bondage or freedom. The miry clay, sticky, smelly, slimy, or the firm rock?

The Lord Jesus, the great deliverer. And the choice is stark, isn't it? The contrast is stark. And this theme of deliverance is right through the Bible from woe to go, from Genesis to Revelation. The story of freedom. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler from the noisome pestilence. Now again, for the sake of children and, well, those with a childlike heart, another demonstration here.

And I'm going to demonstrate what a snare is. Okay? We're going to write what it is. It's a snare, right? This is a snare, or a trap.

And the bird catcher, the fowler, uses such a thing. So we see the little critter comes along. What a cute little critter.

[31:09] The little critter comes along. You can imagine this is like some kind of bird or something. You're watching, kids? Watch what happens when the bird gets caught by the snare of the fowler. He's in.

And, oh, let's just, let's just cut it again. Let's just say, let's just say this is the little bird.

The little bird goes in the snare, right? And, and the fowler he's hiding by goes plump and caught.

The little bird's got caught in the snare of the fowler.

See that? That's what the devil wants to do. He wants us to be captured. But the good news is we can be delivered from the snare of the fowler. And we can be free as a bird.

Imagine this as a bird. You can be free as a bird, right? You can be delivered from the snare of the fowler or the bird catcher. Now, I'm using a bit of lightness here, but hopefully you picture that.

[32:08] Yeah, get a picture on there, a mental picture, right? And the Bible says that we've got a great salvation and that this salvation is a setting us free. The devil is a tyrant. His real is tyranny.

He's like the hunter, the trapper, hiding behind the bushes, ready to pull that cord to drop the snare. And he'll scatter his traps all over the field, all around us.

And you've got to be careful. You know, some, in old times, in country spots, they had rabbit traps, didn't they? And they were scattered all through amongst the undergrowth. You wouldn't know where they were. You might end up stepping on one yourself.

You know, traps are dangerous things. And friends, the devil uses different snares, different traps. Now, here's the heavy duty, here's the heavy duty snare now.

And our little friend's going to get caught again. Watch this, kids. What should we call him? Say, little Joey, right? Little Joey's unsuspecting.

[33:14] He comes into the trap and he sees that yummy morsel of food there. There's something really, really, oh, it smells so good. It's like, you know, fresh off the barbie with tomato sauce on it.

You know, it's just, and here comes the little Joey and he's unsuspecting. He goes, oh, this looks nice. Oh, look at this lovely food here for me. And he comes and he has a nice sniff at it and he starts to play around with it and before you know it, before you know it, the trap goes off.

Oh, little Joey's caught in the trap and he can't get out. Look, the door's shut now. That is a snare, people. That is a snare. And friends, the Bible talks about snares, it talks about traps and this is a trap, right?

It's a trap and we see that the devil uses different snares. The snare of the devil it talks about in 1 Timothy 3 verse 7. Someone commenting on this said this, he said, the devil's method of taking men captive is to benumb the conscience, confuse the senses and paralyze the will.

He'll use every trick in the book to take you captive and he lays all sorts of snares. Now, I'll just touch on these real quick, just a few different shapes and sizes of snares. So here's one here, it's Ecclesiastes 7 verse 26.

[34:40] It says, more bitter than death, the woman whose heart is snares and nets and her hands as bands. Who so pleased that God shall escape from her but the sinner shall be taken by her.

You know, this kind of, this woman that's tempting to lust can be a snare. Another one, it says about they that be rich, they that will be rich, those who want to be rich, those who just attracted by making money and money's their God.

It says, they'll fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts. Then it goes on about a fool's mouth can be his destruction, it can be a snare.

That's Proverbs 18 verse 7. The fear of man can bring a snare and we can get so worried about what people think that we never do anything for God. We're just a Christian who just clams up and doesn't stand up for God.

The fear of man is like a snare and the devil wants us to have these cherished idols in our hearts that cling to our bosom. The Bible speaks about how people served their idols and they were a snare unto them.

[35:47] Now someone has said the heart is an idol factory. This kind of manufactures idols all the time of your own shapes and sizes whatever your idol might be. And the point is that the devil wants to distract your heart and to divert your worship.

The devil wants you to have multiple idols, anything but him, anything but the Lord Jesus, anything but the one who wants to set you free and can set you free.

And the devil wants you to bow down to anything and worship anything but the Lord Jesus. Now friends, as we're coming to wrap up here, the good news is that we can recover from the snare of the devil.

We don't have to be taken captive. God has a glorious escape plan. There is a way of escape and a pathway of victory. And it says, as we see here, our soul has escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler.

Where's little Joey gone? I can't get him out now. But we can imagine he can fly as a bird. He's going to escape as a bird because I'm not going to break it because I need it, but I can break this one.

[37:03] Because, let's see what it says. It says, it says, the snare is broken. The snare is broken. The snare is broken.

The snare is broken. The snare, right? The snare is broken. Oh, look at that. The snare is broken. Amen. That's what Jesus can do, can't he? Jesus can break the snare. He can break the devil's snare. And mind you, we're not inside it when he does that. But God destroys the snare. He breaks those traps.

It says, our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. The snare is broken and we are escaped. Isn't that wonderful good news this morning? You can know the one who sets you free. And it says that his anointing shall break the yoke. He destroys the yoke. He takes it away. It says how God will destroy things.

[38:04] There is a kind of holy destruction if you like. Now, I'm using lots of picture language here but I hope you get the point that actually God destroys some things and that's a good thing. It's a good thing what he destroys.

It says he's going to break some things with a rod of iron like that heavy hammer. He's going to destroy some things and friends, you can know this one. It says of him that the son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.

You know, those things that the devil wants you to cherish, those things the devil wants you to have as idols, anything but worshipping Jesus. The Lord Jesus, he says that he's come to destroy the works of the devil.

He's come to destroy the snare of the fowler and that's a good thing. Sometimes we've got to let God destroy some things in our lives for his glory.

Take away some things to demolish some things as a holy demolition job, if you like. It says, as our Lord declared, that he's come to preach the gospel to the poor, to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

[39:11] Our Lord Jesus, he wants to break every fetter, to break every fetter, to smash down the prison doors, amen, to demolish them.

Now, I know some of you are complaining about the noise before, that we're not noisy enough. I've probably got to complain that it was too noisy this morning. I'm just kidding, sister. But in the sense where he wants to destroy some things, doesn't he, in our lives?

And he wants to destroy the things that get in God's way, all right? That's the point. He breaks the yoke, you know, that yoke, that wooden instrument that holds us in tandem with the devil.

Those things that hold us and make us go and steer the way the devil wants us to go and to do the devil's work. The Son of God is manifested that I might destroy the works of the devil.

And he breaks every fetter, he smashes down the prison doors. Friends, there's good news this morning as we see that it's not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer, that breaketh the rock in pieces.

[40:22] Now I could really demonstrate things here this morning by having a rock here, a nice little kind of sandstone kind of rock, and just smash it to obliterate it to millions of pieces but that would make a bit of work for cleaning the carpet later.

But you can imagine that picture that he breaks the rock in pieces and what's the point that I'm making here is sometimes our heart can be like a rock, as hard as a rock.

It can be such that our heart needs to be broken up. You know, in the Bible it talks about breaking up your fallow ground. In other words, let God cultivate you like a field, not to be a hard, stony ground, but let him stir up and cultivate and to make you fruitful and make you soft and tender towards him.

And friends, God has a destructive side but he wields it for our good. So you might say, Preacher, look, I've had some pretty bad things going on. Maybe it's part of the breaking process.

I'm not making light of this. There's some tough things going on. But sometimes there's things that we've got attachments to. There's things that are kind of idols. There's things that are, as it were, snares.

[41:37] And they can be really limiting our freedom. And they can be like a snare that he's got to break that snare. Sometimes he has to do that because he is the chain breaker.

Amen? He wants to get these chains and to tear them apart, to take them away. He doesn't want us to be like that. He wants to set us free. And he breaks those chains by the power of his word.

God wants to destroy some things in your life. Let him do it. Let him do that work. There's a holy violence that breaks the power of sin.

And so that we get to a point where actually we hate sin. What it was, what it did to me, how I felt after I'd done it. And to get a zero tolerance to sin in our life.

Now of course that's the ultimate objective. We know we're not preaching what's called sinless perfection in the sense that we're still a work in progress.

[42:39] Like Paul says, I'm not attained yet. And if he couldn't attain, if he hadn't attained yet, then surely we're all on that journey. But hopefully the sin's dropping off us as we go. And we're living in a prison planet, if you like.

And the great redeemer, he's the one who breaks the chains of sin. And he can take those chains that bind our heart and set us truly free, free indeed. He has come to set the captives free, to let the oppressed go free.

And friends, salvation is the ultimate freedom. We're not saying here that it's about reforming yourself, turning over a new leaf, just trying, trying, trying really, really hard. I'm talking really, really hard.

It's not good enough. The ultimate and absolute freedom is letting him set you free. He'll get those chains and they'll just fall off.

They'll just fall away because he'll take those chains and break them. He'll set you free. And this freedom that you can know will enable you to live in victory. And God helping you to make that victory a way of life, a freedom that will outflow in your life.

[43:47] And you'll help others to see truly too the great chain breaker, the great one with his destructive power can smash sin, smash the devil's work, smash the fowler's snare such we can be set free, free indeed.

And friends, this morning I'm not meaning to again generate this idea that it's by our own working or our own effort. But it's just letting God have his way.

And you might say preacher, I don't know that I'm a Christian this morning. Friends, salvation is the ultimate freedom. It's the only freedom. Because we are living in a fallen planet, a broken, a damaged planet.

A planet that's really a prison planet. And he is the only one who can set your heart free. He's the only one. And it's because of the virtue of his blood shed for you.

It's as our brother shared earlier, of that finished work that the Lord Jesus Christ has done everything to set you free. The Lord Jesus has done everything to be your saviour, your redeemer, which means again that liberator.

[44:52] He's the one who's done absolutely everything. And we can be, we can know redemption or freedom through his blood. It's because Jesus shed his blood for you that you can know his setting free power today.

You can know victory. And you can walk in that victory as a saved man, a saved woman here today. God will help you. Day by day there will be snares, there will be traps, there will be pits and slimy pits and miry clay and it's the world we're living in.

Evil is all around us but we'll learn to hate evil and we'll learn to love the Lord more and we'll learn to be receptive to his promptings. Let him do some breaking up in a good way so we can be more fitting for his service.

Friends I urge you this morning to know that, to find that freedom. And you might say, you might say preacher I'm not sure that I'm a Christian this morning. Please talk to someone, talk to someone you trust to me or another that you trust and say I want to settle it.

I want to settle it today. I want to know this salvation. I want to know that I'm saved. I'm saved, saved, S-A-V-E-D. And I know that I'm saved.

[46:04] I want to know that this morning. You can know that, not that necessarily words that I say or what others might say affect that but it's having that heart crying out to God this morning to say as we close now, Lord Jesus, this might be your prayer.

Lord Jesus, I thank you for dying on the cross for my sin. That every chain of my sin was broken there at the cross and you have set me free as I trust you, as I know you, as I believe in you and receive your saving love and I thank you Jesus, my Lord, for being that great saviour of my soul. And help us, Lord, each one here this morning that we can walk in that newness of life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you.