

## Spirit Freedom

**2 Corinthians 3:17-18—Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (freedom). 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.**

**Mark 5:15—They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-possessed, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid...**

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Thomas Jefferson wrote:

**We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—Thomas Jefferson, United States Declaration of Independence**

**God created us to live in freedom—we are wired by God to be free people.**

- This fact is so obvious that even our GOVERNMENT recognizes this truth!

**God created us to be free and happy people.**

- Right now, many in our church are experiencing personal deliverance by God.
- God is bringing freedom where there has been bondage to brokenness and sin & stuck-ness.

**As a church, we are discovering and learning to walk in TRUE freedom!**

Today I am not preaching the sermon that I have been preparing for several weeks to preach.

- Today is the day I was supposed to wrap up this summer Holy Spirit series.
- Today we were “supposed to” button things up nicely and move into the fall...
- We were “supposed to” receive our charge from God to GO! IN POWER!

But that is not what the Lord has been telling me to preach this week...

- Dom and the church staff confirmed this as we prayed together early Monday morning.
- This was further confirmed in prayer with the 50 prayer warriors Wednesday night.

And so the series wrap-up will wait for another Sunday, and today we look at Holy Spirit Freedom

- **We celebrate and WALK IN what the Lord IS WANTING TO DO at RVTA right now...**

**This is a special season for us as a church...**

- We are seeing Jesus deliver people right here, right now.
- People are surrendering their lives to Jesus and are being set free from sin and bondage & stuck-ness RIGHT NOW!
- Some people are being healed and others are finding true HOPE in their lives.

**The Lord has been and is tearing down walls of fear, brokenness and bondage and pulling us out of places where we are stuck.**

***It would be difficult to be at Reality Ventura right now if you don't want the Lord tear down walls and deal with fear and bondage in your life.***

- Because that's what's happening right now!
- SO MUCH is happening...
- MANY PEOPLE have been physically, emotionally and psychologically healed and released from bondage...
- Many are finding true HOPE after months and years of despair...

- Several people have been saved and are now resting and walking in new HOPE and JOY found in Jesus Christ.

**Last week Dominic asked people to stand if they were STUCK and wanted the Lord to release them from bondage or brokenness in their lives, and nearly EVERYONE stood up!!**

- And the Lord moved!
  - And the Lord continued to move all week!
  - And the Lord is moving today!
- HOW DO WE FOLLOW UP WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK?
- HOW ARE WE TO WALK TODAY IN LIGHT OF WHAT THE LORD IS DOING IN US?

***\*\*Baby walking vision: I see a fat baby standing on wobbly knees, wanting to walk. His father kneels down and puts His hands around the baby's chubby legs and leads the baby to take a step. There is another step and then another. The baby is wobbly, teetering on his weak legs with their undeveloped muscles. But the Father patiently lets the baby rest in His strong hands as He leads the child to take step after step—at the perfect pace for the young baby.***

The Father wants to direct His children's steps.

- **Don't be discouraged if you are not "running" spiritually.**
  - Be WITH your father and move at the pace He sets for you.
  - If you are WITH God, you are right where you should be.
- **Pace doesn't matter—it's PRESENCE that matters.**

**Learning to walk in freedom is NEW...It might seem strange...because it is NEW!**

If you experienced a new freedom last week—shouldn't I feel "free" or "different"?

- No—last week was just the first step.
- Now we get to walk in this freedom!
- Now we get to walk IN STEP with our father.
- **So what do I do TODAY??**

**\*\*With humility, I want to suggest that "What do I do now?" is not the right question...**

This is a natural question for us to ask...

After all, we live in a performance-orientated culture—***"The better you do, the better you are."***

- So its easy for us to conclude that now that the Lord has done His part to free me, that I am now supposed to get to work—and work hard to earn it. Right?
- NO!
- This is NOT the place the Holy Spirit has brought you too, nor is it what the Bible teaches.

**Rather than asking, "What do I do now?", let's ask, "What has God done for me?"**

- **Salvation is a work grace done by God through faith in the finished work of Jesus.**
- **Likewise, my Christian life is ALSO a work of grace done WITH God through faith in Christ.**
  - This is the GOSPEL!

**Colossians 2:6 (CSB)—So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him**

**The word GOSPEL means good news.**

- This good news refers to more than just being saved—it also speaks to how we WALK.
- The Gospel is an ONGOING reality in the life of a Christian.

**It is not good news to say that once you have been saved you now need to start working hard to perform well.**

- We have been saved from the slavery of our sin AND slavery of trying to earn love and approval.

**Galatians 5:1 —It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.**

**Misunderstanding and mis-applying the Gospel is dangerous and can lead us to slavery.**

Here is how:

**When we fail to grasp the full blessing of the Gospel and apply it to our lives will always end up falling into one of two errors: Pride or shame.**

Many of us suffer from one (and at alternate times possibly both) of these issues: Pride and shame

- **We either feel incorrectly good about who we are and what we have done...**
- **OR we feel incorrectly bad about who we are and what we have done.**

Thinking that I am too good or that I am too bad is a BROKEN way of thinking.

- Some of us (yours truly) vacillate between the two (frequently)

**These broken ways of thinking affect how we see ourself, God and how we see others.**

- When we think too highly of ourselves we are cold, cruel and demanding of others.
- When we are ashamed of ourselves we try too hard to please other people

Both of these lead to a lifetime of bad, unhealthy and dysfunctional behaviors and relationships

**The “fix” for these patterns of thinking is to apply the truth of the Gospel to my thinking:**

- To trust that Jesus has done EVERYTHING necessary to save and satisfy me.

**God CHANGES US as we live out the Gospel truth about who we are in Christ:**

- God changes how we think about our identity and live our life.
- God changes how we view and walk with God.
- God changes the way that we view and live relationally with others.

**God frees us from the need to:**

- **Be better than other people**
- **Seek the approval of other people.**
  - So for those enslaved by the need to impress God—the Gospel says to you that **you HAVE NOT and CANNOT impress God.**
  - For those enslaved by the need to impress other people for approval—the Gospel says to you that ***you have all the approval possible in God!***

**The Gospel frees us from drawing our identity from the destructive trap of walking off on our own.**

- **When we are saved, Jesus gives us a NEW identity—HIS identity.**
  - We are loved by the Father as Jesus is loved.
  - We are given power to walk as sons and daughters—the same power Jesus had.
- The Holy Spirit gives us real power to WALK in this new identity.

**This is Holy Spirit Freedom!**

Listen, it is NOT that we do not have to obey God... we DO obey God—BUT:

**The Gospel changes our motives and our heart for obedience.**

- Our motive is no longer to earn God's favor, but to enjoy life in Christ with God.
- Our heart is not to “try harder” to please God, but to be transformed by God.

**If we have been accepted by God through Christ, then we know that we cannot earn God's acceptance through our own good behavior.**

- We were stuck and NEEDED to be saved. RIGHT?
- Falling into a works-mindset is a distortion of the good news of the Gospel and leads to fear and bondage.

**As Christians, we should be less concerned with personal performance and more deeply concerned that we continue to teach ourselves and to teach others to apply the finished work of Jesus to our daily lives.**

**So what do we do? (haha)**

This week I was given this word—**“Abide”**

Abide is powerful word.

- Jesus started His ministry and for 3 years called people to “Follow me.”
- At the end of His life, as He is about to enter heaven, Jesus shifts His vocabulary.
- At the end of His life, the command is not to “follow me”, but to “abide in me”
  - Jesus' death and resurrection have set us free to ABIDE in Christ.
  - Paul went so far as to state that our new life is “hidden in Christ”

This language of “abiding” and being “hidden in Christ” speaks of tremendous intimacy.

- This language has nothing to do with what we have done...
- This is “freedom language”—**Gospel Freedom**

**The Holy Spirit's gift of freedom in our life flows from a well of intimacy with Christ.**

This gift of freedom is NOT a stand-alone spiritual gift.

- Freedom is not given like the gift of prophecy or tongues...

**Freedom is attached to—it flows from—a SPRING OF INTIMACY with Christ.**

- If you need water, you go to a spring—If you want FREEDOM, you go to Jesus. We don't just “drink” from this spring...we are invited to ABIDE in Christ.

**Freedom is the fruit of abiding in Christ.**

**John 15:4-5—Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.**

Picture this—we are IN Christ.

- HIDDEN!
- Abiding—LIVING—rooted...

- Everything about our life starts and ends with Jesus.
- What Jesus has started in your life, HE IS FAITHFUL TO FINISH.
- Any and all fruit in our life is from Jesus.

**So, how do we respond to what God is doing? How do we ABIDE in Christ?**

- **Let's look at the picture of the demoniac we saw last week...**

Demoniac who was constantly tormented, running around naked who lost his mind.

- Self-destructive...
- Dangerous...
- Unpredictable...
- Impossible to help...

Jesus FREES this man of his burdens and demons, sending the demons into pigs...

Many of us recognized our need to be set free from SOME form of bondage last week...

- Some were immediately set free—there are CRAZY testimonies I've heard all this week!!
- Some are waiting on the Lord and still trusting Him for deliverance.

However, there are some who didn't stand because they don't see their need for deliverance from bondage.

The Lord gave us a picture of this in our corporate prayer time on Wednesday:

***“Long-time Christians who have attended church forever were here Sunday but didn't stand up because they don't feel they need deliverance...but they're stuck in routine and lukewarmness. And it's their stuck-ness that is their bondage.”***

This invitation to freedom is for EVERY Christian—not just for non-believers—if this is you, ask God!

**This demoniac has had a SUPERNATURAL ENCOUNTER with the living God.**

- He had been CHANGED.
- He had been made NEW.
- He had been FREED.

What was his first step in his freedom? What did he do? WHAT DO WE DO??

**Mark 5:15—They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-possessed, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid...**

**1. He sat—This is such a good picture for us to see and experience.**

**If you're a Christian, Christ has set you FREE—like he did with this guy!**

- Many of you were released last week from your stuck-ness.
- God didn't set you free so you can work for Him.
- He didn't set you free so you could get busy paying Him back.
- He didn't set you free because he is short-handed and needs your skills...

**Jesus set you free so that you could rest and ABIDE in Him and walk in freedom.**

**I can see this guy sitting there just catching his breath and looking around with his new mind.**

- rejoicing in the freedom of having his own thoughts...
- sitting in freedom from the oppressive activities he was forced to perform.
- sitting as if he was enjoying his new freedom like a kid sits with a new Christmas present.
- sitting as if he was getting his toddler legs underneath himself before attempting to even stand...

**Christian, let this free man show you how to be free—he SAT in his new freedom and identity.**

**Jesus has set you FREE—ENJOY the freedom!**

- We don't need to worry—REST and enjoy the freedom God has given you!

**The great American theologian Janice Joplin wrote about freedom,**

**“Freedom’s just another word for nothin’ left to lose”—Janice Joplin, “Me and Bobby McGee”**

**That’s a clever line... and a sentiment sure seemed to ring true for many back in the late 60s...**

- **But freedom for freedom’s sake is not actually freedom.**

**Freedom is not simply having the ability to do whatever we want. True freedom is having the POWER to not choose slavery or stuck-ness.**

This man sat in true freedom—enjoying the freedom that God’s power and authority had given him to not fall back into slavery.

- **So what do we do?—We rest in the finished work of Jesus.**

There is more to this picture...

**Mark 5:15—They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-possessed, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid...**

**2. He was sitting there dressed—he was clothed.**

- This is significant in Genesis—Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness...
  - This man was free from demons and psychotic oppression and was now aware of his nakedness.
  - He was free to now think clearly about himself, and so he was aware of his nakedness.
  - Part of the picture we are given is a man formerly naked now clothed.
- This was promised in Isaiah 61—how Jesus would come and EXCHANGE true life for dead things.

**Isaiah 61:1-3—The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes...**

Here sits a man who had been unable to sit in peace...

He sat dressed in clothes, which was probably the most obvious change to the people who knew him.

**3. He was also sitting there with a “clear mind”**

- Jesus’ eviction of the man’s demons had COMPLETELY changed His mind.
- Psychosis was the fruit of his condition before he was changed by Jesus...
  - He lived in fear.
  - He lived in confusion.
  - He lived a life of impulsive submission to destructive demons.

**Here is this man SITTING, CLOTHED, IN HIS RIGHT MIND—He was the OPPOSITE of what he once was.**

This man was healed, released, transformed, made new, etc... by Jesus as an act of GRACE birthed from God’s love.

God is a God of exchange—he takes things from us and gives us BETTER things in return:

- He exchanges the demoniac's demons for freedom.
- He trades our loneliness for true acceptance.
- He trades our dead-end lives for TRUE life.
- He exchanges our confusion for CLARITY.
- He exchanges our anxiety and insecurity for joyful rest and peace.

His exchanges are not fair!! He exchanges EXTRAVAGANCE for our ashes:

- He doesn't just fix us, He gives us a NEW LIFE.
- He doesn't just give us a new life, He gives us POWER TO LIVE our new lives.
- He doesn't just give us empowered lives, He also gives us purpose and peace and joy!

**Salvation is not just getting some help for our lives—we now have PEACE in our new identity.**

**The thing we “DO” is sit and just BE who we are in Christ... we catch our breath.**

- We rest in our new identity and we enjoy Jesus.
- Sit in the presence of God and receive the love and approval we've been longing for.
- We rest in the presence of God and receive the hope and confidence we've always lacked.
- We rest and receive the joy and pleasure of our good Father.

**We find REST in Jesus because:**

**Anything good that we do FOR Jesus comes from a place of having been WITH Jesus.**

**The fruit of freedom is formed in relationship as we rest in Jesus**

- For a few weeks the Lord has been showing us that there is some sort of cork that is blocking or stopping the flow of the Spirit in some people.
- Others saw a hand covering the mouth of a bottle—again, preventing the vessel from being filled.

**Last week the Lord removed that cork and pulled that hand away!**

Today the Lord is wanting to FILL His vessels.

**Today, our good father wants to FILL US UP so we can pour out from FULL VESSELS.**

- And so we sit and receive from God—we are FILLED UP, so to speak.
- And then we live lives FULL of the joy and hope and love and the power of God.
- Having been filled up by God, we are then able to POUR OUT the love of God into others

Everything in the kingdom is given so that it can be given away.

**Let's recognize that God is doing something AWESOME right now in His church.**

- But let's not fall into the common error of believing that this building is the church.

God is not filling a building with His Spirit...

- God doesn't fill perishable things with His imperishable love.

God fills eternal things with His eternal love!

**Reality Ventura isn't a temple that God is filling...YOU are the temple of God!**

- YOU are the Church—YOU are the bride Christ has won by dying on the cross.

**YOU are what God is filling with His Holy Spirit—not some building or place.**

- And it is THROUGH YOU the He will pour out.

What we experience together is the presence of God—God is faithful to BE WITH His people.

- We are blessed by God to know God.
- We are blessed by God to have Him—to HOST Him—in our lives.



- We are HOSTS of the Holy Spirit as we live and walk through each day.

**This is perhaps the greatest calling in our lives—to live as a HOST to the living God.**

**Guys, the LIVING GOD is WITH us—He is IN us!**

This week I spoke with two different people about their struggles to fight darkness in the people and world around them.

- These are heavy situations.
- These were TIRED people who have been fighting this darkness for a long time.
- I was praying “spiritual warfare” prayers to push back darkness...
- I was praying for “WEAPONS” for these people to use in their fights against darkness...

At one point the Lord ministered to me and said,

**“You don’t fight darkness by swinging weapons at it. You defeat darkness with light.”**

I think that is a good word for us today:

- we don’t struggle against flesh and blood...
- we don’t fight our battles the same way people fight each other...
- we let the light of Christ SHINE from us into the world and people around us!

The prophet Isaiah saw a “glorified Zion”—a people whom the Lord had inhabited:

**Isaiah 60:1-2**

**“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.**

**“For behold, darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples;**

**But the Lord will rise upon you and His glory will appear upon you.**

**TURN ON THE LIGHT, CHURCH!**

**Let Jesus SHINE in all His glory IN and THROUGH you.**

Again, what is happening in us is due to the presence of God!

- GOD is inhabiting the praises of His people!
- God is SHINING upon His people!

God has given us FREEDOM and is leading us in FREEDOM.

- This is a work that Jesus began by speaking creation into existence.
- This is a work that Jesus is sustaining.
- This is a work that Jesus will complete.
- **Period.**

- So we don’t fall back into anxiety—GOD IS WITH YOU.
- We don’t let fear creep back in—GOD IS LOVE—He is FAITHFUL!
- We don’t go back to familiar places of bondage—GOD IS TEACHING YOU TO WALK

And so we walk by faith—we take measured steps of faith.

- We allow our good father to help move our wobbly legs—like that fat baby learning to walk.
- We enjoy Jesus and the new life He brings.
- We host the presence of God EVERYWHERE we go.
- We **shine** as lights in a dark world.

Let’s WORSHIP and give thanks to God in everything we do.

- **Today, SIT in the presence of God.**
- **Allow the Lord to fill you with the joy and confidence that you are His child.**
- **Let the Lord take up residence in every part of your heart and mind and body.**

**As you ABIDE, TRUST and SURRENDER to Him, He will continue the work He began.**

**\*\*PRAYER\*\***