

Are You Free?

John 8:31-36

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,

³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

³³ They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.

³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

The Central Issue

Five hundred years ago, the world was in great upheaval. Two of the greatest movements in Western Civilization came on the heels of one another. The first was known as the **Renaissance**, which was a cultural and educational reform brought on mostly by a recovery of ancient philosophy and literature. The Renaissance was responsible for finally bringing the West out of the so-called Dark Ages. The second

movement was a moral and theological reform that was supposed to be within the Church, but was very soon swept away as heretical by evil Popes and Bishops. You know it as the **Reformation**, and were it not for this Reformation, none of us in this room would be here today. For, the Reformation was the beginning of Protestantism from which our church was born.

One of the great leaders of the Renaissance in the Roman Church was a Dutch priest named **Desiderius Erasmus** (1466-1536). Of course, the greatest leader of the Reformation was **Martin Luther** (1483-1546). Luther was 20 years Erasmus' junior. When Luther nailed his 95 Thesis to the door at Wittenberg, people began to pressure Erasmus to choose sides. Are you for Luther or against him?

Erasmus was not a Reformer or a Protestant, and did not want to get involved, but his NT edition of the Greek NT and his opinion that there was terrible moral corruption within the Roman church had such a huge influence on Luther that he couldn't help but be involved. Eventually he succumbed to the

pressure. Erasmus found a way of disassociating himself from Luther without denying everything Luther was saying. In 1524 he wrote a little theological discourse entitled, *De Libero Arbitrio* or *A Diatribe* or *Discourse Concerning Free Choice*.

Luther, not wanting to get involved either, found that he had no “choice” but to respond to Erasmus. The result a year later was a work he considered his most important of the many volumes he eventually wrote: *De Servo Arbitrio* otherwise known as *The Bondage of the Will*.

Erasmus was a poor pine tree at the foot of Mt. St. Helens under the flame of Luther’s erupting pen. But at the end of his book, Luther praises him (sort of) saying, “Unlike all the rest you alone have attacked the real issue, the essence of the matter in dispute, and have not wearied me with irrelevancies about the papacy, purgatory, indulgences, and such like trifles (for trifles they are rather than basic issues), with which almost everyone hitherto has gone hunting for me without success. You and you alone have seen the question on which everything hinges, and have aimed at the vital spot; for which I sincerely

thank you, since I am only too glad to give as much attention to this subject as time and leisure permit.”¹

From the very early days of Paul’s disputes with the same Roman church and the churches of Galatia, to Augustine’s argument with Pelagius, to Luther and Erasmus and Protestants vs. Roman Catholics, to Calvinists vs. the Arminians, to Whitefield and John Wesley, to John Piper and Greg Boyd, this has always been the issue. Freewill or not freewill? Liberty or bondage? Freedom or Slavery?

Freewill and Freedom

Our passage today is six short verses in the middle of Jesus’ discussion with Jewish leaders at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles. I’m focusing in on these six verses rather than move beyond them (as I will do next week), because it seems to me that for this brief period in the debate, Jesus gets right at Luther’s “vital spot.” These verses revolve around the two basic ideas of **freedom** and **slavery**. The word “free” (*eleutheroō*;

¹ Martin Luther, “Bondage of the Will” in vol. 33, *Luther's Works, Vol. 33: Career of the Reformer III*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 294.

eleutheros) is used four times; the word “slave” (*douleuō, doulos*) is used three times. These are opposites. The opposite of freedom is slavery. This is how Jesus couches it. He says **you need to be set free (vv. 32; 36)**. This means, you are a slave. Everyone is a slave; there are none exempt until they are set free.

But most Christians today don't really understand this. They don't understand it because they presuppose, just like the Pharisees here, that it isn't true. I don't need to be set free. I am already free. This comes across most clearly, as it did with Erasmus, in how we start talking about our choices. So what I want to do for a bit here is look at this whole idea of freewill and then we will compare it with Jesus' teaching. Make no mistake, at the heart of our passage today is this idea of freewill.

Our passage comes on the heels of **John 8:30** which says, “**As he was saying these things, many believed in Him**.” The idea is that as Jesus was talking, people began listening to him, and in the process, they “**believed**” in him. In Evangelical

circles today, we rightly stress the importance of personal, individual belief in Jesus Christ. It is one of the few things we still seem to have right. If you do not believe in him, you cannot be saved. This is fundamentally true. But many fall very short of Jesus' teaching here about [what true belief actually is](#) and [where it comes from](#).

The Nature of Freedom

Part of our problem stems from an improper view of [the origin of belief](#). We think that the origin of belief comes from us. To put it another way, we believe that we are “free” to choose Jesus. As Erasmus' book puts it, followers of Christ must have “free choice” to follow him. Today, the common term is “[freewill](#).” In religion, the idea is that anyone who follows Christ chooses to follow Christ of their own “freewill.” It is their freewill that makes them followers of Christ or children of God. Almost all of us have grown up with this idea and so it is as natural to us as the air we breathe. Anyone who would deny it is obviously either wicked or insane. There

is nothing more self-evident than freewill, even though strangely, many people couldn't define freewill if their life depended on it.

Let me attempt to get at what I think most people mean by freewill. First, let's look at a presupposition or assumption that we make. *Freewill* presupposes *freedom*. Have you ever thought about this? I'm not sure many people have, but it is important. **Freedom means** that you are not bound, not a slave, not under the authority of anything or anyone. Freedom is exactly what Jesus is talking about in our passage. **Freewill means** that your will is no more bound than the rest of you, that there is nothing coercing it, nothing hampering it, nothing influencing it, nothing over it, nothing forcing it, nothing telling it what to do.

We usually talk about freewill in response to “choosing Jesus,” so for today, I'll just stick with this.² When it comes to

² I will not, in this sermon, get into whether or not the idea of freewill is even coherent, at least in the sense that most people understand it. But there are certainly many philosophers, Christian and non-Christian, who deny that it is. This week, I watched one of the so-called “four-horsemen” of the new atheist movement, Sam Harris, give a presentation on his book on freewill on Youtube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCofmZIC72g>). While I certainly do not hold to the presuppositions of Harris regarding God, and therefore believe his whole argument rests on a faulty premise, he makes some interesting observations regarding the true power of the brain to make “free-choices.” Especially

our choice of Jesus, if the will was enslaved to something other than Jesus, or bound to some other impulses, desires, motivations, forces, or spiritual entities that are opposed to Jesus, it would not be free to choose him. It would be enslaved. This would not be freewill at all. Slaves do not have freedom *by definition*. If you are a black slave living in the 1820s in the United States, you do not “choose” to be free and suddenly become free because you made that choice. In fact, if you tried to leave the plantation, you would probably be beaten or maybe even killed. Slaves must be **emancipated** by an outside source if they are to have freedom. Therefore, freewill presupposes that you are not a slave to anything in the choice or decision that you make to believe or not to believe in Jesus Christ.

Rather than being in bondage and slavery, the will is usually understood to mean that we are “**able**” to choose between belief or unbelief, between following Christ or not following Christ (remember, our whole passage begins with

interesting is his experiment of choosing a city and why and how we chose to think of that city rather than another.

people “believing” in Jesus). I’m not talking about Cain and **Abel** here. I’m talking about an ability or power that comes from the will. Let me make this more specific. If Jesus says “**believe in me,**” he is giving a command. If Jesus says, “**Follow me,**” he is giving a command. The Bible speaks of commands as laws. Law can be in either the OT or the NT. Jesus is giving a law, an imperative; he is telling you something you must “do.” You must “believe.”

Freewill implies that you *can* do it. As Erasmus put it, “‘Thou shalt’ implies the indicative ‘Thou canst,’ and to deny the later is to stultify [cripple] the former.”³ This is a very typical idea found throughout the world of religion and philosophy, because it seems logical. **Immanuel Kant** put it this way, “For if the moral law commands that we *ought* to be better human beings now, it inescapably follows that we must be *capable* of being better human beings.”⁴ A thousand years earlier a follower of Pelagius put it this way, “**God would never**

³ This quote is from the introduction to Luther’s “Bondage of the Will” in the *Works* edition, p. 9.

⁴ Kant, *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, 6:50, p. 94

have commanded the impossible.”⁵ When we know our true spiritual condition, such statements are actually quite arrogant. Getting at the unspoken arrogance that lies just under the surface, one person has therefore defined this freewill saying, “It simply means that ‘I *can* run my own life by my own choices without outside interference, thank you” [emphasis mine].⁶

It seems reasonable that God would never command something that couldn't be done, at least to people who think that they are basically good to start out with. That is how our minds think. It wouldn't be “fair” for him to do that. So, people who deny freewill are often accused of impugning God's sense of justice and fairness. God is fair and your hatred of freewill is an attack on Him. So we are told.

Even if they understand that somehow there are enemies out there trying to keep us from believing, most still think this formula must be true. Have you ever heard this idea when it

⁵ Anonymous, *On the Possibility of Not Sinning*, IV.3 From *The Letters of Pelagius and His Followers*, ed. & trans. B. R. Rees (Woodbridge, England: The Boydell Press, 1991), 169.

⁶ R. K. McGregor Wright, *No Place for Sovereignty: What's Wrong with Freewill Theism* (Downers Grover, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 45.

comes to believing in Jesus, “God casts his vote for you. The Devil casts his vote against you. You cast the deciding vote.” This is what people mean by freewill. But as one person asks or this slogan, “Is this how it works in salvation? Is God just one side of a cosmic struggle with Satan for the souls of men, who must resort to “campaign tactics” to sway voters to heaven? This view of God is an emasculated God who is desperately hoping mankind utilizes his free will to choose Him. Frankly, but this is a somewhat pathetic view of God.”⁷ He is getting at the heart of who God is compared to who we are. This is antithetical to what Jesus says in our passage. Jesus focuses more on who we are in our passage, but it is certainly worth thinking about the damage such pathetic proverbs do to our view of God. Autonomy from God, freewill to do whatever we want, is no friend of God’s incredible, amazing grace.

⁷ From “Question: ‘What is Libertarian Freewill?’” <http://www.gotquestions.org/libertarian-free-will.html>

Did They Really Believe?

Again, to stress its relation to our passage, all of this talk about freewill came because of how it told us in **John 8:30** that many believed in him. Freewill is the explanation most often given for why someone believes. Now you are going to see something very curious. Notice who it says “believed.” It tells you in **vs. 31**. “So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him...” Here, those who believed are said to be “the Jews.” Jesus spoke to these “Jews” and in **vs. 33** they begin to answer him.

Their response is that they are the offspring of Abraham. Later, Jesus tells them that in reality their **father is the devil (vs. 44)**. In fact, Jesus says a lot of pretty bad things about these “believers.” They are **slaves to sin (34)**. They are **indifferent to Jesus’ word (37)**. They are **liars (55)**. They are **guilty of mob tactics** including attempted murder of the one in whom they have professed to believe (**59**). That’s quite a few things working against this pristine force called freewill. Frankly, if you want to talk about fairness, then you need to

look at the kind of people God shows grace to. Rather than say it isn't fair for God to command dirty, rotten scoundrels to obey his law, you should say it isn't fair for God to save those dirty, rotten scoundrels, even one of them, by his grace.

At any rate, their belief is not true belief. It is a **false belief**, a superficial belief, a spurious belief. We have seen this kind of belief several times in this gospel, as we have talked about it before (see **2:22-25; 6:60, 66**; etc.). This kind of faith is explained in Jesus' **parable of the sower**. He described two kinds of temporary, no saving belief. **"Seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fall among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them"** (**Matt 13:5-7**).

The Lord goes on to say that the word is **immediately received with joy** by these people (**vs. 20**). But it withers away because of **tribulation or persecution, by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches** (**21-22**). In response to this

kind of temporary belief, Jesus tells the “believers” in John 8 that true belief means that a person “abides in his word.” To abide means to “continue” or “remain.” In other words, Jesus is talking about perseverance as the mark of true faith and a real disciple. As Carson says, “A genuine believer remains in Jesus’ word (*logos*), his teaching ... such a person obeys it, seeks to understand it better, and finds it more precious, more controlling, precisely when others flatly oppose it.”⁸

Jesus finishes this sentence by saying, “... and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (vs. 32). This quote has been regurgitated so many times, it has almost lost its true meaning. Most of the time, people talk about “truth” here as nothing more than ascent to a set of propositions or facts. There are facts about science, philosophy, art, culture, and on and on it goes. If you believe the truth about those things, you will be set free. While that may be true, that isn’t what Jesus is talking about.

⁸ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 348.

Jesus has a specific kind of freedom in mind. It doesn't come from knowing facts. And its focus is deeply spiritual in nature. It is "freedom from sin" (34) and by virtue of his reference to the devil later on, freedom from Satan. Abiding in Christ's word, becoming a true disciples, knowing the truth and being set free is being set free from sin and the powers and principalities in heavenly places. The Apostle Paul spoke about this many times. He said, "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness" (Rom 6:16)? "When we were children, we were enslaved to the elementary spirits (stoicheia) of the world" (Gal 4:3, CJB). He said, "The law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2).

Freedom from Sin

All Christians long to be free from sin, but there is more than one we can be free from it. Arthur Pink spoke of the

order of salvation in terms of four “Ps” regarding sin.⁹ At different stages we are set free from a different “P” of sin. When we die, we will be set free from the **presence** of sin (glorification). But that means, until we die, sin is still present with us. Prior to this, during our Christians lives, God is setting us free from the **power** of sin (sanctification). This is a process, not an event. Because of sins presence, it is an incomplete process at any moment while we live.

Nevertheless, because it is God’s work in us, we experience more and more freedom from the power of sin, even while we come to recognize more and more sin in our lives. It is a strange paradox.

The amazing thing is that there is an event (actually two of them) that set us free from sin in two different absolute senses. When we have true faith in Christ, we are set free from the **penalty** of sin. What is the penalty of sin? Paul says, “**The wages of sin is death**” (**Rom 6:23**). To be set free from the penalty of sin means that you will not die. “**But,**” you tell me,

⁹ Arthur Pink, *A Fourfold Salvation*.

“We do die, each one of us, so how can we say we are set free from the penalty of sin?” It is because the penalty in mind here is an **eternal death**, also called the second death, or eternity in hell as punishment for sin against God. Those set free from the penalty of sin will never be thrown into hell, they will not perish or die everlastingly. This is called **justification**, which is God’s declaring a person “not guilty” in a court of law, even though they are guilty. God does this because a person believes or trusts in Jesus Christ that he will be their righteousness in their place. They accept God’s offer of a sacrificial substitute that dies in their place.

The Origin of Freedom

But how is a person justified? We know it is by faith. But what causes a person to have true faith? As we can see today, there is a kind of faith that is not true. This false faith comes because people don’t really believe in Jesus at all. But the incredible thing is that people cannot do anything about that. Think about it. You can not choose to believe that which you

do not believe. No matter how hard you try, you cannot believe that there are unicorns on Mars, unless, for some crazy reason, you do believe that already, in which case, I would call you insane. Go ahead, I dare you to really, truly believe that there are unicorns on Mars. Can't do it? That's because you can't believe what you don't believe.

Something must happen to you to cause you to believe. In the case of a unicorn on Mars, it would probably take overwhelming proof that there are such things as unicorns, that such things could actually live on Mars, and that they in fact do live on Mars. In the case of believing in Christ, you need proof about who he is. But with Christ, because the problem is not merely rational, but also moral, you need something even more than this. You must first have a desire to believe in him. Now I'm talking about [the origin of freedom](#).

This desire is created by something called [regeneration](#) or the [new birth](#). This is where we are set free from the [pleasure](#) of sin. When you are set free from the pleasure of sin, then

you no longer love it as you once did. When you no longer love it as you once did, you see the value in turning to Christ for forgiveness of your sins and eternal life. This is what creates true power of choice. As **William Hendriksen** says in his commentary on this, “**One is free ... not when he can do what he wishes to do but when he wishes to do and can do what he should do.**”¹⁰

So how does this regeneration come about? This is where we get back to freewill. Most people think that, for some inexplicable reason, **they choose to regenerate** themselves. But this is nonsense. Regeneration is the process of being brought from death to life. It means to create anew. Dead things do not choose to be brought to life. Created things do not choose to be created. The way it is talked about here is “slavery to sin,” but it is all the same idea. The Bible just uses different metaphors to help you picture it. It is remarkable that no matter what the illustration God gives that so obviously shows our impotence, some people will simply not listen.

¹⁰ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, vol. 1-2, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), Jn 8:31.

Nevertheless, freewill is an impotent savior. It cannot regenerate a person, because it has to be alive to make a decision.

Let me be clear. This says *nothing about the will after regeneration*. In fact, once a person is made alive, is born again, is set free, is created anew, then they have a will that now desires Christ and wants to believe his word. They will exercise this will because they have no greater desire. This issue is therefore not *whether* people make choices to follow or not to follow Christ, but *why* they make the choices that they do. Not whether, but why. And do not think I'm just talking about all of this as some guy on a hobby-horse. No, this is the most basic point of the text.

How is a person regenerated? How is a person set free? Not by willing or by running, but by the Son. **John 8:36** says, "*If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*" You have to be set free by the Son. "**But,**" someone always objects, "**we choose to have the Son set us free.**" That's like saying the slave chooses to tell the master it will now be set free. That is not

what the text says. It says the Son chooses to set you free. He alone has authority and power of will over sin and Satan.

But now, very quickly, I'm getting at the good news of Christianity, for believe it or not, all of this talk demands good news if a person is going to be saved. It is not just that the Son sets you free, but he does so **through means**. You must "**abide in his word**." But that first means you must hear and know his word. God does not zap people up into his kingdom like **Scotty to the Enterprise**, apart from the Word. In fact, apart from the Word, the only zapping going on would be more like a **bug in a blue light special** in your back yard. For apart from the Word, people cannot stand in the presence of God. God sends his word as a means of grace so that he might save you.

But what does John say about the word earlier in the Gospel? "**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God ... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**" (**John 1:1, 14**). To abide in Christ's word is to obey his teaching, but it is more than to obey his

teaching. It is to be **in Christ**. Jesus has the mystical union in mind here every bit as much as he does obedience to him.

Let me illustrate this union. Later he will speak about this using the metaphor of a **vine, branches, and fruit (John 15:1-8)**. Bearing fruit means to be full of good works. It means to be full of **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23)**. True disciples of Christ bear this fruit, and see an increase in its production throughout their lives. That is why, at the end of the parable of the sower, Jesus says that some seeds fall on good soil and produce grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty (**Matt 13:8**). Bearing fruit is important. But **how does a person bear fruit?**

They bear fruit by **being branches on a vine**. If you see a branch lying on the side of the road, it is a dead branch. It is incapable of bearing anything at all. Fruitful branches are living branches and living branches are shoots off of a vine. Jesus is the vine and his disciples are the branches that are on the vine, or have been grafted into the vine, or who draw

their life from the vine. Curiously, in John 15 Jesus will use the same language of “abiding” to describe life in the vine (15:4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10). Just as he says here, “If you abide in my word.” So, to abide in the word, you must first be in the Word, don’t you? To be in the Word you must be put there by the Son. True belief bears this out, while false belief sooner or later proves itself false by not abiding, by leaving, by forsaking faith in Jesus Christ.

This is the point of Jesus telling these “believers” what is still going on in their hearts. When he tells them that their father is the devil or that they are slaves to sin or that they are indifferent to Jesus’ words, or that they are liars and murderers, he is telling them, in a different way, but with the same idea behind it, what he told Nicodemus—that you must be born again. In John’s Gospel, the same themes keep coming back upon themselves, over and over, repeating themselves so that you can interpret the new thing in light of what you have already heard.

The new thing today is the idea of slavery to sin. And for a slave to be set free, they cannot use their freewill, they must be emancipated, as I said earlier. When does this emancipation occur? It occurs when a person meets Jesus Christ or when Christ reveals himself to them personally. Now, at just this moment, you have come into Christ's presence, for that is what the corporate worship of God does in a very special way that you cannot find any other time or place. When we gather together, we meet with Christ in heavenly places. Here we become "enlightened" (baptism). We "taste of the heavenly gift" (Lord's Supper). We share in the Holy Spirit (His divine teaching service). We taste of the goodness of the word of God (preaching) and the powers of the age to come (our being lifted up in Christ to heavenly positions) (Heb 6:4-5). In the most real sense possible, then, Christ is here in our midst, leading our worship, teaching us by his Spirit, and talking to us through the Word. He speaks to you now, even as he spoke to them then.

But to meet him is a different thing than to know him. I have met politicians, celebrities, and professional athletes. That doesn't mean that I know them. We live in a bizarre world in this regard, especially when it comes to famous people. Because of media, we are actually led to feel that we know people whom we have never met. But they don't know you from Adam. Most of them have probably never even met you. But you feel like you know them.

Jesus must not be a celebrity to you, where you think you know him because you go to church or hear a sermon or read the Bible. You do not want Jesus to say, "I never knew you" after doing all kinds of things in his name. You don't know Jesus because you walk an aisle or pray a prayer, or go to a homeless shelter, or feed a starving child in the third world, or vote against abortion. You can be acquainted with him in those ways, but you must meet him personally. You do this when he introduces himself to you.

"But," you say, "how can I meet him when he isn't here physically?" The answer is that he reveals himself to you

personally to your soul, Non-Physical Entity to non-physical entity, Spirit to spirit. How does he introduce himself to you? He does it **through the Word** that you are hearing this very moment and through the Holy Spirit; in the places where you taste of his goodness, here he introduces himself to you. The Spirit is a real person whom Jesus sent in his place to do this very thing in the world. The Spirit is pleased to introduce himself to you when you hear the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed to you.

Understand that Jesus Christ came to this earth from heaven, lived upon it in full obedience to the law, died on the cross as a sacrifice for your sins, was raised to life to give you life, and ascended to heaven to take his place as the king of his kingdom and ruler of all creation. Understand that he sets people free from sin because he is alive to do it in an eternal glorified body capable of interceding to the Father on your behalf. When you hear these words, if you hear them truly, you will know it, because they will be confirmed to you as truth and you will delight in that truth. You will delight that Christ

did this for you. This is not a subjective feeling where you kid yourself that you know Christ. It is an objective reaction to the truth of his word. Rather than hate and hostility to this message, rather apathy and indifference, there is a change in the inner part of your being to this message, where you now love what he has done for you. It moves you deeply. It causes your inner being to stir. It feels like you have come to life from dead.

Do you love the gospel? Do you think Christ died for your sins? Then you will find yourself necessarily responding to this truth, first in [repentance](#) of your sin and in [faith](#) and trust in Jesus to forgive you of your sin and in the Father to do so for Christ's sake. You will find your desires suddenly begin to change so that you [love new things](#), things you never thought you could find yourself loving. You will find yourself [desiring to obey](#) Christ's commandments, because they are pleasing to you and to the God whom you now love. You will find yourself wanting to know more and more about how you

can please him, and there will be a drawing of your heart to know his word better so that you can do that.

All of this is the experience of a person having been set free, because you have come to know the Son of God, the Word and the Truth, the Way and the Life, the Bread and the Water, the Gate and the Door and the Vine. He has shown himself to have revealed himself to you, and he has set you free. Go and do these things then, and know that you have been set free to do them by a powerful God who stands in your presence this very moment through the gracious invitation to come to him through his Son.

Because we are all slaves to sin, we must have Christ set us all free. You must not trust in any work that you do to be set free, or in any desire you have to be set free, because you are a slave to sin and to Satan. You are bound by these things in chains that you cannot escape from, in a dungeon you cannot get out of, on an island you cannot swim off of, by a guard that is more powerful than you can ever imagine. You can put on a good face to others, and perhaps even yourself, thinking you

are fooling everyone. But that is a false belief. Instead, you must look to Jesus Christ alone to set you free. Trust that he does this and that he delights in doing it. Look to him, believe his words for they are true, remain in him throughout all your days, abide in the word and show yourself to be a true disciple.

And you will know the Truth.

And the Truth will set you free.

And if the Son sets you free,
you will be free indeed.