

## Oh Freedom, Part 2

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 26 February 2023

Preacher: Kevin Smith, Senior Pastor

[ 0 : 0 0 ] that is our song in everything blessed be the name of the Lord in all things blessed be the name of the Lord when I feel good when I don't feel good blessed be the name of the Lord is that all right hope that's all right because that's my story I'm sticking to it and when I and when I lose my mind pray for me so I'll get back to it because it happens amen I'm just trying to tell you oh thank you praise you thank you so much for leading us and singing and worship thank you you know how hard it is to blow a trumpet yeah that tight lip thing man I used to play trombone while I was a kid and I tried trumpet I mean really you are appreciate you though yeah yeah he understands while we're back to John chapter 8 and let's pray father thank you thank you for the joy of the Lord which is our strength some of us need that joy a little bit more right now those who've come down for prayer those who are grieving we think of our sister

Michelle and we think of our brother Tim and we've lost loved ones oh God will you encourage them and strengthen them thank you for Michelle leading us in worship earlier even though I know her heart heart is heavy it's heavy only you can do that even when our hearts are heavy we still say blessed be the name of the Lord worthy is the lamb that was slain only you can help us do that and even now there's some in this room who need that help so please comfort ye your people so that Lord we cry out glory to God glory in the highest come what may glory to God may Jesus Christ be praised so help us Lord we need you dark world but your light is shining may we walk in the light give us eyes to see the light walk worthy of the great name of Jesus to that end we pray that your word would go forth now with your power through your unworthy servant may it be evident that is you at work and not merely him and may all who hear this message all in this room and who may hear it otherwise Lord may they hear the voice of Jesus and may they be drawn to him so come now Holy Spirit fill us and fill this place in

Jesus name we ask amen amen John chapter 8 beginning at verse 31 so Jesus said to the Jews who have believed him if you abide in my word you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free 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 Jesus answered them truly truly I say to you everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin and the slave does not remain in a house forever the son remains forever so if the son sets you free you will be free indeed that is the word of the Lord please be seated the Negro spirituals that have now can become classic music our music born of the pain and the suffering of African Americans in this nation they this music gave hope and gives hope and insight to all who trust in Christ gives insight on how people can deal with their pain the pain of this life and there is pain blessing and glory and majesty and majesty and beauty but yes as you know there is pain there is pain there's much good theology in these songs and last week I began my message with the reading of the Negro spiritual from which the title of my messages come in this section of scripture oh freedom this week I want to free at last free at last free at last thank God Almighty free at last but do you know this part oh remember the day I remember it well my dungeon shook and my chain fell off I know my Lord is a man of war he fought my battle at hell's dark door

Satan thought he had me fast I broke his chain and got free at last Satan's mad and I'm glad I hope to God to keep him mad you can hinder me here but you can't hinder me there the Lord in heaven the Lord in heaven the Lord in heaven's gonna answer my prayer I went in the valley but I didn't go to stay my soul got happy and I stayed all day oh this ain't all I got more besides I've been born a God I've been baptized right in the devil's face how do you sing a freedom when you live in bondage you have to recognize there's a greater freedom that you need and that you have a greater freedom that will give you strength to deal with all the hardships of life there's a greater freedom and that freedom is only given through the love and cross and grace of the Lord

Jesus Christ so I got a question for you are you walking and rejoicing in your freedom Christian or are you living in the dungeon of bondage one or the other maybe a little bit of both sometimes are you walking in freedom are you in the dungeon last week we saw what I began calling steps two of the three steps to freedom from our greatest enemy as human beings and our greatest enemy is not one another our greatest enemy is our rebellion against God our greatest enemy is in us we call it sin and we saw that abiding in Christ's word as we abide in his word it leads these are step one abiding step two leads to embracing our new identity as disciples and there's one more thing it does that abiding leads us to have a greater understanding of truth notice what Jesus says in verses 32 and 33 you will know the truth and the truth will set you free truth and we've been looking at truth throughout this great letter of John

I mean it's one of the key things in his writings in John and in first John I believe but certainly in John we saw in chapter 1 chapter 4 chapter 5 even in chapter 8 where Jesus says I am the light of the world we saw once again John keeps coming back to truth our Lord Jesus will later pray in the same book in what's called his high priestly prayer what I call the true Lord's prayer the longest prayer our Lord ever uttered that we have a record of is in John 17 in John 17 17 he says sanctify he spoke to the Father sanctify them my disciples in the truth your word is truth truth is reality it's the way things really are and as the light of the world Jesus brings the truth about God and about creation and since you're a part of creation he brings the truth about you he wants you to see it and as we've seen his words then give us truth that we need to know so as to please God because that's what happens when his truth impacts you and the center of his truth is the gospel the good news about what he would accomplish for all those who trust in him when that impacts your life you find that now you want to please him you want to do what God says remember Ephesians chapter 5 verse 8-10 he says for at one time

[10:33] Paul talking for at one time you were darkness not that you only lived in darkness he said before Jesus got hold of you you actually were darkness but now in Christ the gospel has come truth has come you are light in the Lord so walk as children of light live your life as light he's saying for the fruit of light is what it should look like is in all that is good and right and true and then he says this wonderful phrase and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord that's what happens when truth hits you when the truth of Christ gets a hold of you you you want to you want to please Jesus you want to please God you want as it were you want to make him smile as it were as those who know the truth this becomes the major goal of our lives finding and doing what pleases him but you know we're in a fight aren't we because here's the thing our culture tells us to focus on what pleases us and yet Paul is saying that when the gospel when the truth of Christ hits us we want to focus on what pleases God so what's happening is in this we are swimming upstream like salmon the current is always rushing on you to please yourself and yet the word but that the spirit of God is at work in you to push you the other direction to focus on how can I please the Lord today

I came across a blogger and I know I'm pronouncing his name wrong so if you know forgive me Nitin Namdeo Nitin Namdeo he's an Indian he's considered a positivity and inspirational blogger he says he has an interesting little line he has on on his site you have your own life why waste it to focus on what pleases others you have your own life he's telling people to inspire us why waste it on focusing on pleasing others and yet Jesus comes and says love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your mind with all your soul with all your strength and the second commandment is like it he says love your neighbor as yourself love your neighbor as yourself and yet we're being told and this is inspirational teaching please yourself you have your own life focus on you crazy huh even our the good thing is even our culture fights back against that the good here's psychology today if you read that magazine on occasion

I pick it up from time to time it repeatedly talks about happiness and how we should pursue happiness as human beings and guess what it says happiness involves creating strong relationships and helping others thank you psychology today and yet our blogger tells us and so many quotes like this so many you'll be surprised this is what's on the internet you have your own life do you baby what pleases the Lord most what do you think pleases the Lord most you know what it is faith in the son what is that plea that makes the father smile when you trust Jesus Hebrews reminded us that without faith it is impossible to please God what pleases God most is that we trust Jesus he sent him for us he gave for the father gave the son to us and he says now what's gonna make me happy as it were what's gonna make me smile because this is our father what makes what puts a smile on our father's face when you his children trust the son when you

when we his children believe in the truth that his son continues to pour out for us that's why we must that's why Jesus said you must know the truth he isn't just talking intellectually know the truth amen if you don't know it intellectually you don't understand it at all you so yes we have to use our brain our mind yes most definitely but the word know there is bigger than that in our text it is an experiential knowledge not just a doctrinal knowledge it's experiential why do we say that because Jesus

Jesus is a person and therefore he means for us to experience him truth is an experience with the son go with me for a minute just save just let your imagination go with me for a minute the truth is like living in a dark cave all your life I don't know how old each one of you are but I'll be 59 in a couple months so I'm gonna use me I've been living in a dark cave for 59 years you put your number in never seen the sun your eyes only see the darkness and you know what happens when that's true right your eyes become accustomed to the darkness you're living in this cave and it's so dark you can't even see the walls it's that dark but you know every inch of that cave because you've been in it for years whether it's 12 years for you or 10 years or 20 or whatever you've been in that cave all those years so you know the cave you can get around in that cave quite well but you've just never seen it it's pitch dark you don't know what even the rocks look like but you can feel them and you know every rock in that cave because that's where you've been but you're still in the dark you don't even know for sure that there's even life outside your cave never been out of it now you've heard sounds outside your cave right you've heard sounds and you've heard you didn't know this but you heard voices because you've never met anybody else and so it's just you in that cave you've heard sounds and from time to time but you didn't understand what was going on the dark is all you know but then some guy enters your cave he finds his way in somehow and he convinces you after a period of time to walk with him and as you walk with him he takes you out of the cave to the surface and when you get to the surface you see the beauty of light you see the sun for the first time you see the sky and it's a beautiful blue sky and a few fluffy white things floating around up there oh yeah you learn that they're called clouds and you're blown away you're seeing nature oh what is that that's a tree oh my gosh a tree and you go over and you hug the tree it's probably a palm tree those are my favorite and you're just enjoying this green stuff on the ground see in your cave there's no grass just dirt so you're like that's oh it feels good you're walking barefoot oh this is good he loving it grass and you know and you can walk on it so it's not a lawn it's grass you know I hate people don't walk on my grass it's made to walk on you're out there just enjoying this experience and you I mean I mean I mean I mean it gets dark and stars come out and the moon and you're like wow wow wow and you're seeing animals and creatures you've never seen before you're experiencing light you know light now and it's mind-boggling it's exciting it's it's a whole new world it's always been there you just never saw it now you do and this being says this person says keep hanging out with me and you become a light walker you're walking in the light with this guy who's your guide and he's helping you understand everything he's explaining stuff to you and he's walking with you and it's beautiful but Pastor Billy there's a problem you still have a little bit of cave dweller in you you're in that cave a long time and there's a little bit of cave dweller still attached to you and so what happens is as you're walking in the light with this wonderful person who's guiding you through everything explaining life to you you find that sometimes walking as you're walking storms come thunderstorms hurricanes

[ 20 : 51 ] God forbid you're in California earthquakes and you're finding that sometimes you're walking and though you're in the light but you're with this guy yet stuff gets hard you trip and you have to watch where you're going and then you discover something called illness because it was just you and your germs in the cave now you got everybody's germs COVID of all things and you and you and it gets difficult and what happens you know what happens when to this guy when he's walking in the light and hardship comes he begins to look back toward the cave because in the cave see he didn't have any problems he was blind as a bat but he didn't know it but he was but he didn't have any problems he started looking back saying hmm that cave sure seemed a little safer than this hurricanes and thunderstorms and COVID I mean what the why am I out here and he begins looking over his shoulder and when he looks over his shoulder he can't see where he's walking he falls down let's call that sin he falls down he reminds me of the

Israelites you know I want to go back to Egypt it's tough out here we're the water I want a big mac dog I mean you want you keep giving me this manna I have big macs and chicken nuggets in Egypt Egypt looking pretty good that's why our light walker is thinking that cave might be safer and maybe

just maybe just maybe he starts heading back toward the cave he thinks the light the guy with him doesn't see him he waits until he walks around the corner and he sneaks off and he's heading back toward the cave but here's the thing Rachel here's the thing his guy loves him so much he won't let him go back to the cave he cuts him off he catches up hey where you going he grabs it and we call that repentance right come on keep on coming and he's looking come on and he begins to keep here's the thing even when he travels backwards even when he trips and falls he's still walking in the light he's still in the he's not in the cave he's in the light that's what happens when the truth of Christ hits you Jesus comes into the dark to bring you out Charlie he brings you out and he's going to keep you with him and he's going to keep showing you you thought you knew your world you thought you knew all there was to know super genius that you are but you were in the dark with meaning meaning you didn't know squat you didn't know anything in our spiritual darkness we think we know but we don't know when Jesus brings us into the light all of a sudden the world opens up did you the whole creation everything opens up now you begin to realize oh my gosh that's why I'm here oh that's that's who did all of this you begin to see everything in the light and the truth gives you freedom you're knowing the truth your guide he happens to be the truth and he's showing you more and more of the truth and if you keep walking with him you will learn you will continue to learn more and more of the truth because you can't handle it all at one time just keep walking just keep walking with him the truth is found in Jesus and that's what brings freedom knowing him and that's truth he sets you free to live he sets you free to be all that you're supposed to be and when you die he only gives you an upgrade who knew the truth as found in Jesus brings freedom that's not mere religion that's not mere

I'm going to conclude this in religion self-help philosophies because they're like religions much more it's more than that you see it right here right they answered him when Jesus says the truth will set you free they answered him we are offspring of Abraham have never been enslaved to anyone how is it that you say you will become free religion by religion I mean doing religious stuff to appease the deity attending worship meetings small groups self-help groups rituals bible studies or whatever studies that we do in our groups all kinds of things that are given to us to make our lives better to improve our lives and well-being the problem is if they leave God out if they leave Jesus the truth out it's just another way of seeking freedom in the dark without

God without a guide without the true guide and that's what's happening we're and we're always being pushed to follow or to suck up even as Christians to end up going into these things and giving ourselves to these things without God they didn't really know the truth and you know how you know they didn't know the truth these Jewish people in this text say to Jesus their Jewish Messiah that they had never been enslaved to anyone but the Jews had been enslaved to everyone just their own history it blows me away their own history how could they say this they were enslaved to the Egyptians right that's the whole exodus motif they were enslaved when they got in the Philistines enslaved them at times they were enslaved by the

[ 28 : 19 ] Babylonians Nebuchadnezzar this is history I'm talking now the Babylonians they were enslaved by the Syrians by the Assyrians and by the Greeks and finally at the time of the writing they're actually enslaved under the Roman Empire how can you say we've never been enslaved to anyone that's what slavery to sin does to us it causes us to deny reality when you enslaved to sin living in the dark Jesus is telling them the one they said we don't know anything about that he says if you practice sin you are slaves to sin practice if that's your habitual way of living he says you are slaves to sin they didn't realize their own slavery they thought see when you're in the dark you think everything okay when you're a slave to sin you you think everything's fine

I don't have any problems you got the problem you religious people you got the problem you need the crutch I don't need no crutch I don't need nobody that's the talk of someone who doesn't realize the depth of their own personal depravity they think all we think sometimes we think all we need is a little extra money all we need is to get a great idea and be successful that's the darkness talking self medicating ourselves thinking that these things will give us the happiness if I just had somebody all I need is somebody to love or in some cases somebody to love that's the darkness talking and we don't even realize because we're slaves we don't even realize that we're truly in the dark we say things like

I'm getting better every day look in the mirror you're getting better you handsome guy you you're getting better every day we talk to ourselves in our mirrors it's always darkest before the dawn we got these quaint sayings what doesn't kill you makes you stronger all these quaint sayings but

without God without Jesus without the truth those things won't save you don't save anybody just another way of helping us trying to help ourselves and when you're in the dark you can't help yourself it's only when we come to see that we're in the dark and we don't know and we admit to God hey I thought I had it all figured out but I really didn't know forgive me and help me that's when the light has come that's when that ray of light shines down on your soul

I remember years ago my pastor Dr. Voice was preaching one Sunday night and then I forget it I worked in the psych hospital at that time a patient I had actually we began talking as I was doing her intake and she had been there that same night and we talked about that it was really neat but Dr.

was preaching at 10th church and the lights go out I mean the whole sanctuary is huge lights go out and he kept on preaching we're all sitting there in the dark and he keeps on preaching and I'm like I don't see there going doesn't he see there was one light on in the whole place above him shining down on him in the word of God I still remember like it was yesterday when that light that shaft of light shines in your soul you realize I don't have it all together you realize you have been a slave to your own desires to your own feelings to your own wants to your own cravings to your you realize you were you were slaves to people approval you were a slave to wanting more stuff and you got to get more you realize all kinds of slavery you may realize you was a slave to substance who knows but

[ 33 : 10 ] God begins to show you who you are really and more who he is and light shines they're standing right there and talking with the light and they dismissed him Jesus said men prefer darkness rather than light that's our natural state as human beings we really prefer darkness but in the grace of God our Lord Jesus comes and begins shining light eyes open and we become intimate with the truth and we're changed forever there's one last thing that the text shows us before we move on before we end this morning slavery to sin is a deceptive lifestyle it's deceptive that's what

Jesus the story is about this image he gives here is about verse 35 the slave first of all he says he says we're offsprings he says yeah sure you are everyone who preaches he says the slave does not remain in the house forever the son remains forever the slave does not remain in the house forever the son remains forever very simple statement very deep meaning think about what he's saying both the slave and the son live on the estate right they both live there the slave may even have some authority especially in the kind of slavery of the Roman Empire sometimes slaves had authority and responsibility and even some control over the wealth like stewards the slave may even but the slave is not a son still a slave if necessary the slave can be sold he will not get any inheritance usually unless he gets adopted which is which was kind of rare he may look like he is living large because he's in control of some parts of the estate but he's still a slave he craves sonship but he can't have it because he's a slave the son gains everything the son cannot be sold the son is actually the master of the estate if the slave tries to act like the son he will be rudely awakened slapped down as it were sin deceives us into thinking we are sons when we are only slaves you see we all crave freedom because we were created in the image of

God we were created in the garden to be free and we were truly happy Adam and Eve were truly happy in the garden but then something happened they rebelled against God and sin enslaved them and as their descendants us and we've been looking for freedom ever since craving freedom and happiness you want it it's in your DNA you can't help but want freedom you can't help but want happiness amen but sin and the devil have blinded us to the kind of freedom and happiness we truly need so we end up settling for sexual freedom financial freedom economic freedom artistic freedom and the like we end up settling for these things that we can get for ourselves and they are lesser freedoms than the freedom that our father wants to give us and we know this is true because when we get those things we're still not free we're still not happy if I get the freedom

I think I crave then I want I find that I need more of it or some other type people who get money we live in Miami Billy Pastor and Sherry Miami there's a lot of wealth in Miami I never forget driving to my wife was teaching at this Florida Christian school and her students would come in first grade they'd come in crying sometimes her class come in crying what's the wrong my daddy moved out that was common in her class all that wealth and the families were falling apart all that wealth I mean people who houses had swimming pools they had waterfalls in them all that wealth I remember going to one game I'm sitting next to Gloria Estevan and her husband trying to be trying to be cool Gloria wealth everywhere and we keep telling ourselves that's what we need right we

need more wealth we need more power we need more financial freedom well some of us are saying we need more sexual freedom it's all about freedom but when we get it we're still not sons we're still slaves and it doesn't belong to us we aren't happy we end up like Cain careful

Christian we end up like Cain in Genesis 4 the Lord said remember Cain brings this offering God says that's not what I asked for your brother Abel he brought what I asked for here's what happens the Lord said to Cain why are you angry why has your face fallen he's depressed he's down he's hurting okay he says God says if you do well will you not be accepted if you do not do well sin is crouching at the door it desires is for you but you must rule over it God is saying to Cain that sin is the ultimate crouching tiger and hidden dragon it's coming for you bro it's coming for you Cain sin is like that line it's waiting for you it's hiding behind as soon as you walk by if you don't deal with this stuff if you don't come if you don't recognize your need if you don't recognize how have you failed and come to me that's what

[ 40 : 05 ] God God was calling Cain to himself and Cain he was warning him that if you don't come to me sin is going to take you it's going to enslave you and what does Cain do he sought freedom from his guilt he sought freedom from his shame on his own terms so what does he do he kills his goody two shoes brown nosing brother because he thinks by doing that he will get rid of the guilt and the shame maybe somehow in a twisted sort of way he thought God would accept him now but that's the thinking of a slave of someone in the dark thinking they can find freedom without submitting to God and his ways and you know what happened when

Cain killed his brother he killed himself really he began a life of running away from God practicing sin living in rebellion and that life dominated him Jesus the light of the world is the true son and that son offers us what we need most freedom from the tyranny and slavery of sin freedom from what's in us that makes us self centered that makes us think the world revolves around us and what we prefer and what we like we all got the disease but Jesus is the only cure we only will find lasting happiness in being with the son and therefore being part of the family the son sets us free because he makes us sons and daughters he adopts us into the family and now you're safe now we're safe it still means we'll be tempted we'll come back to this next time we'll still be tempted because like I said before you know we're out here and it's all good but that cave you know the old life has a little bit of interest yes it does but you've been set free you've been set free in Christ if that's true of you today you are a son you belong in the house you belong in the family and all the wealth of the father belongs to you every Paul said every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places belongs to you Ephesians chapter one you don't have to go back to slavery some years ago I remember doing a lot of studies black church African American church history and reading slave narratives and one of the things that always amazed me was the slave preacher yes there were many slave preachers actually many but several that's for sure many and if you saw

Harriet with us or if you've seen it before the movie Harriet you remember the slave preacher and they clip they show he's actually quoting from this from Philemon I believe in telling oh actually Ephesians 6 he's telling slaves to obey their masters you be good slaves now you obey your masters and but on the same time he was one of the leaders of the underground railroad the slaves were always outwitting the masters they using Christianity they were destroying and dismantling that system without people even knowing it but there were other slave preachers that the movie didn't bring out but truly existed and these slave preachers preached that same message obey your masters but they did it because they thought by doing so they'd be safe from the master's tyranny they were sellouts they thought they'd be okay they thought the master would like them that the master would support them if they said what the master wanted them to say here's the point they were wrong they were still slaves you are never safe with sin never safe you're only safe with the son who came into your darkness and brought light to set you free you've got to get to the place in your life where you love light and hate the dark because you love

Jesus because you've been saturated by his love and you don't want to go back to the dark because you found in him light the light of life the light of love the light of acceptance there's nothing better father in Jesus name lord help us we are surrounded by the dark but we are sons and daughters of the king those who have trusted in you we are sons and daughters we have a better inheritance help us to see that help us to cherish what you give us deliver us from wanting the lesser pleasures of this life pleasures without you pleasures that focus only on us getting more for ourselves lord deliver us and help us to seek first your kingdom and your righteousness trusting you will give us what we need the more you've given us what we need to have in

[ 46 : 55 ] Jesus thank you father thank you for life in Christ name amen