

Thought For The Week

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You Will Be Free Indeed: Parts 1 and 2

Introduction

On July 5, 2026, the West Side Church of Christ heard a unified message across morning and evening services titled "You Will Be Free Indeed." Drawing from John 8:31-36, Romans 3–8, Galatians 5, and supporting passages, these sermons explored biblical liberty in Christ with fresh perspective. Familiar texts revealed new depths when viewed through the lens of freedom.

The Bible produces faith. Studying a theme like liberty transforms well-known passages, showing truth we had not fully seen. Freedom in Christ is not secondary; it is central to the gospel. Jesus sets captives free, and the New Testament develops this with remarkable depth and practical power.

The anchor text is John 8:36: "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." Both sermons answered what this freedom means, how it is received, and how it shapes daily life. They distinguished yet united two aspects: positional freedom through reconciliation received at salvation and progressive freedom grown into through sanctification by the Spirit.

The First Aspect: Freedom Through Reconciliation

The first aspect addresses our standing before God in judgment. Am I righteous and justified, or condemned? This is the reconciliation Paul develops in Romans 3–8. Through hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, and baptism—the typology of union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection by faith—we are freed from sin, receive the gift of righteousness and justification, and the Holy Spirit. Psalm 32:1 and Romans 4:7 are fulfilled: blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Jesus makes us free. In John 8:31-36 He declares that abiding in His word makes us true disciples who know the truth that sets us free. Which means we must know and live His word to know the truth. Those who practice sin are slaves to sin. Romans 6 proves this. All baptized into Christ are baptized into His death, buried with Him, and raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4). Our old self was crucified with Him so we would no longer be enslaved to sin (v. 6). The one who died with Christ is freed from sin (v. 7). If we died with Him, we believe we will also live with Him (v. 8). Saving faith unites us with Jesus in a death like His and a resurrection like His (v. 5).

Former slaves to sin obeyed from the heart the standard of teaching—the baptismal typology—to which they were committed. Having been set free from sin, they became slaves of righteousness (Romans 6:17-18). This is the glorious exchange.

This freedom includes the gift of righteousness. Romans 4 links it to Abraham's faith. Abraham believed God was able to do what He promised, and it was counted to him as righteousness. These words apply to us who believe in Him who raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 4:21-25). Our faith

centers on the resurrection. Jesus was delivered for our trespasses and raised for our justification (Romans 4:24-25).

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith (Romans 5:1) through baptism (Romans 6:5-8,17-18), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . The Holy Spirit pours God's love into our hearts (v. 5). We who were enemies have been reconciled by the death of His Son and are saved by His life (vv. 9-11). We rejoice in God through Christ, through whom we received reconciliation.

The result: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2). This legal standing is complete and secured by Christ's finished work.

Paul notes limits to the law's power. Where there is no law, there is no transgression (Romans 4:15; 5:13). Sin existed before the law but was not counted as transgression. Cain's murder resulted in banishment, not execution, because no formal law yet defined the penalty. God later established consequences. The law creates the category of transgression.

The law has power only while one lives (Romans 7:1). Since we died with Christ, we are freed from the law of Moses. The law has no jurisdiction over the dead. This is also why we are not under the law of sin and death. Our righteousness is God's gift to us received by faith through the baptism typology, not earned by perfect law-keeping, for all have sinned (Romans 3:23).

Galatians 5:1 declares: "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." The Galatians were pressured to add circumcision and law-keeping for justification. Paul warns this alienates from Christ and causes falling from grace. To return to the law for righteousness declares Christ's sacrifice insufficient. We are already justified by the gift of righteousness.

Supporting declarations confirm our standing: Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who condemns? Christ Jesus died, was raised, and intercedes (Romans 8:33-34). God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that in Him we become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). Christ redeemed us from the curse by becoming a curse (Galatians 3:13). In Him we have redemption through His blood (Ephesians 1:7). Salvation is by grace through faith, not works (Ephesians 2:8-9).

This is the "already" of salvation—received by faith, secured by Christ. We stand justified, adopted, redeemed, with no condemnation that can stick. This reconciliatory freedom is the foundation.

The Second Aspect: Continuing Freedom Through Sanctification

The New Testament does not stop with reconciliation. Because we are free, we are called and empowered to become increasingly free from sin in daily practice. This progressive aspect is sanctification—the ongoing liberation from sin's remaining power for the express purpose of being set apart to do God's will.

Romans 6:22 states: "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life." We have been freed from sin and enslaved to God. The benefit is sanctification. God has prepared good works for us (Ephesians 2:10) and provides continual cleansing so we can grow in doing His will.

This is where Romans 4:8 and 1 John 1 apply. "Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against him." In whose spirit there is no deceit (Psalm 32:2). Walking in the light brings fellowship and cleansing by Jesus' blood (1 John 1:7). Confessing sin brings faithful forgiveness and cleansing (1 John 1:9).

Freedom is never license to sin. It is freedom for loving service. Galatians 5:13-14 says: "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Against such there is no law. The law of liberty is love in action.

We live this by walking in the Spirit. The law of the Spirit of life sets us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2). The Spirit brings adoption as sons, not slavery and fear (Romans 8:15). Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17). We are transformed into Christ's image with ever-increasing glory (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Galatians 5:16-25 commands walking by the Spirit so we will not gratify fleshly desires. The Spirit and flesh are opposed. If led by the Spirit, we are not under the law. The fruit of the Spirit grows: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Those in Christ have crucified the flesh. If we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Philippians 2:12-13 holds the tension: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." We work because God works in us. Reconciliation gives confidence; sanctification is ongoing transformation by the same Spirit who justifies us.

Creation itself will be liberated from bondage to decay into the freedom and glory of God's children (Romans 8:21). Our future is glorious freedom.

Responsible Exercise of Freedom

Such a costly gift demands responsibility. Freedom must never cover evil or self-indulgence. Galatians 5:13 and 1 Peter 2:16 warn against using freedom as pretext for the flesh or cover for evil. Live as God's slaves.

"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful... I will not be dominated by anything" (1 Corinthians 6:12). In disputable matters (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8-10), we must not judge harshly or cause weaker brothers to stumble. Keep personal convictions between yourself and God and pursue peace and mutual upbuilding.

James 1:25 promises: "But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres... will be blessed in his doing." The gospel is a liberating law that blesses when continued in.

The New Testament teaching on liberty is clear. The source is Christ's redemptive work and the indwelling Holy Spirit. We are freed from slavery to sin, the law's condemnation and curse, fear, and death. We are freed for loving service, growth in holiness, walking by the Spirit, confident approach to God, and future glory. We live it by faith in the Spirit's power, with self-control and love, not as pretext for evil.

Conclusion: Stand Firm

The command sounds across both sermons: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1). Are you standing firm, or yoked again to legalism and performance on one hand, or sin that promises freedom but delivers chains on the other?

Reconciled in Christ, you have every resource to walk in sanctification and greater freedom by the Spirit. The Son has set you free. You are free indeed.

This freedom was purchased by Christ's precious blood. It calls for responsible, others-oriented living under Jesus' Lordship without nullifying moral responsibility. May we live as those truly free—standing firm in reconciliatory freedom and growing daily in sanctified freedom the Spirit produces.

To God be the glory for the freedom we have in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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You Will Be Free Indeed: Parts 1 and 2

Introduction

On July 5, 2026, AM & PM, we explored the theme of freedom in Christ through the title "You Will Be Free Indeed." Drawing from John 8:31-36 and Romans 3–8, the sermons revealed two interconnected aspects of liberty: freedom through reconciliation at salvation and progressive freedom through sanctification in daily life. The Bible's teaching on freedom brings fresh insight to familiar passages, producing faith and calling us to stand firm.

Freedom Through Reconciliation

The first aspect addresses our standing before God. Through hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, and baptism—the typology of union with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection—we are freed from sin's slavery. We receive the gift of righteousness and justification (Romans 3-6). Jesus declares in John 8:36 that the Son sets us free indeed. Romans 6 shows our old self crucified so we are no longer enslaved to sin. We become slaves of righteousness.

This brings peace with God, the Holy Spirit, and no condemnation (Romans 5:1; 8:1-2). Where there is no law, there is no transgression (Romans 4:15; 5:13). Dying with Christ frees us from the law's power (Romans 6:5-8; 7:1,4-6). We are justified by faith through baptism (Romans 6:17-18), not law-keeping. Galatians 5:1 urges: "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm."

Continuing Freedom Through Sanctification

The second aspect is ongoing growth. Having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, we reap sanctification leading to eternal life (Romans 6:22). We walk in the light, confess sin, and receive continual cleansing (1 John 1). Freedom is for loving service, not license to sin (Galatians 5:13). Walking by the Spirit produces fruit of the Spirit and transforms us into Christ's image (Galatians 5:16-25; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

Conclusion

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