



What Does Freedom Look Like? John 8:31-36 Westport Christian Church July 4, 2010

³¹So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." ³³They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" ³⁴Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵"The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶"So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Today we in America celebrate our freedom. We celebrate our Independence. It is important that we take time to remember those who have given their lives in order that we might enjoy the freedoms that we have today. We must never forget, we must always remember, but what does freedom look like?

The Presentation of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

A cover letter, dated in Philadelphia, July 6, 1776, was attached to the Declaration of Independence, as it was sent to the British authorities, wherein John Hancock states:

"Gentlemen, Altho it is not possible to foresee the consequences of human actions, yet it is nevertheless a duty we owe ourselves and posterity in all our public councils to decide in the best manner we are able and to trust the event to That Being who governs both causes and events, so as to bring about his own determinations.

Impressed with this sentiment, and at the same time fully convinced that our affairs will take a more favorable turn, The Congress have judged it necessary to dissolve all connection between Great Britain and the American Colonies, and to declare them free and independent States as you will perceive by the enclosed Declaration, which I am directed to transmit to you."

The result of the documentation that followed to Great Britain set off a chain of events that resulted in what we now know to be the Revolutionary War. According to Wikipedia, The total loss of life resulting from the American Revolutionary War is unknown. As was typical in the wars of the era, disease claimed more lives than battle. Between 1775 and 1782, a smallpox epidemic raged across much of North America, killing more than 130,000 people. Historian Joseph Ellis suggests that Washington's decision to have his troops inoculated against the smallpox epidemic was one of his most important decisions.^[57]

Approximately 25,000 American Revolutionaries died during active military service. About 8,000 of these deaths were in battle; the other 17,000 deaths were from disease, including about 8,000 – 12,000 who died while prisoners of war, most in rotting prison ships in New York. The number of Revolutionaries seriously wounded or disabled by the war has been estimated from 8,500 to 25,000. The total American military casualty figure was therefore as high as 50,000.^[58]

About 171,000 sailors served for the British during the war; about 25 to 50 percent of them had been pressed into service. About 1,240 were killed in battle, while 18,500 died from disease. The greatest killer was scurvy, a disease known at the time to be easily preventable by issuing lemon juice to sailors. About 42,000 British sailors deserted during the war.^[59]

Approximately 1,200 Germans were killed in action and 6,354 died from illness or accident. About 16,000 of the remaining German troops returned home, but roughly 5,500 remained in the United States after the war for various reasons, many eventually becoming American citizens. No reliable statistics exist for the number of casualties among other groups, including Loyalists, British regulars, Native Americans, French and Spanish troops, and civilians.

What does freedom look like?

A story talks about Josh, a man who was "owned" by a Mr. Leckler, and his "master" held high standards of himself, and let this known to his wife on frequent occasions as well. Mr. Leckler often had his wife listen to him and afterward would ask her advice, but never took it though. One day he asked her a question that pertained to a principle about Josh, his slave. He had been letting him work a side job during his spare time for a man by the name of Mr. Eckley, who had lied about the amount of hours Josh had worked for him, thereby shorting Josh of his pay. Not only was Josh shorted, but Mr. Leckler too, for he made money off of the work Josh performed for other men. Mr. Eckley wasn't shorting Josh enough to the point

where it affected Mr. Leckler to act upon because he used to say that "the question of a dollar or two is nothing to me".

However, Josh wanted to buy his freedom from Mr. Leckler and he knew that every penny Mr. Eckley shorted Josh of, meant he was one step shorter from buying his freedom. Mr. Leckler had been giving Josh one-tenth of what he made from his side job; the rest of course was pocketed by his "owner". So, we know that the question of principle here is dishonesty, but this is not the question Mr. Leckler asked his wife. His question was "Well, if Josh knew how to read and write and do numbers . . ." "Mr. Leckler, are you crazy!" said his wife. "If Josh knew these things he wouldn't be cheated when he worked away from me. But teaching a slave . . ."

"Fearing that black literacy would prove a threat to the slave system - which relied on slaves' dependence on masters - whites in many colonies instituted laws forbidding slaves to learn to read or write and making it a crime for others to teach them."

Mr. Leckler decided that he would secretly educate Josh, so he could look after himself. "Of course, Mr. Leckler knew that when the black man learned his numbers, things would change. But it would be years before Josh could earn \$2,000, the price Mr. Leckler asked for Josh's freedom."

What the slave master didn't realize, was that on one of Josh's travels to his side jobs, a "slave" that was free, had taught Josh a few lessons. Therefore, Josh knew the initial stages of reading. After an year, Mr. Leckler decided that Josh had had enough education. Mr. Eckley was now adding on to his home, and hired Josh to see to all the plastering. Of course, after Josh completed the job he assumed, Mr. Eckley was cheating him out of pay once more; he was right. Josh pointed this out to an astonished Mr. Eckley who paid him what he owed!

"It is easy enough for the master to order the body of a slave, this far you may go, and no further." The master has laws and chains to hold the slave back. But what master can say to the mind of a slave, "I order you to stop learning"? Josh had begun to eat the forbidden fruit of learning, and he was hungry for more. Night after night he sat by his lonely fire and read one of his few books.

All this time, the white hills of the Yankee north seemed to call to Josh. The north wind told him that in the North he would be a slave no longer. Josh knew it would be hard to win his freedom. Worst of all was the law. It stood like a stone wall between slavery and freedom, between slavery and Josh's hopes. Then one day, when he was working away from home, a voice called to him from the woods, "Be brave!" And later that night the voice called to him like the north wind, "Follow."

One night Mr. Leckler commented to his wife that Josh should have been home that night. Josh did not show that night nor the next. Mr. Leckler took a train that second night of Josh

missing to where he had been working. Josh had left though the night and he was expected to return to his "owner". Mr. Leckler realized that Josh had run away." He pursued after him with the dogs. The trail they followed led them to a train station. "Mr. Leckler asked the stationmaster if he had seen a black get on the train. "Yes," the man said, "two nights ago." "But why did you let him go without a pass?" cried Mr. Leckler in anger. "I didn't," said the stationmaster. "He had a written pass signed 'James Leckler.' "

No, no one can stop you from thinking, even if you are in the worst of prisons! May we all use the freedom we have today and make the most of it!

By Claudia Miclaus

WHAT DOES FREEDOM LOOK LIKE?? .

There was a young Army man of 19, who, was a "River Rat" in South Vietnam. He was performing night patrol with his other members in the boat when they came upon enemy fire from ALL sides. Not wishing to see his comrades go down, he commenced to standing up in the boat to draw fire from the enemy. He stood moving a spot light back and forth in order to confuse the enemy in an attempt to save his men, eventually becoming a casualty himself. His brave act saved the lives of most of the men in the boat. He was awarded the bronze star posthumously to his grieving widow. This young Army man was Godfather to my wife, Shelley.

What does Freedom look like?

What are you willing to do for freedom, what does freedom look like?

Stephen

In Acts we read of Stephen. His death was a direct result of his preaching the Gospel and the faithful manner in which he exclaimed the glory of the Lord, even unto those betrayers and murders of Christ. Stephen was stoned to death in the street at Passover the Spring following Jesus' Crucifixion. The outrage Stephen caused was so great that there was great persecution of the Church through the regions of Judea and Samaria, particularly in Jerusalem. It is said that over 2,000 Christians suffered persecution and death as a direct result of Stephen.

James (The Great)

The next martyr was James, the son of Zebedee, elder brother of John. James' martyrdom was about 10 years after the death of Stephen. This occurred under the hand of the infamous Herod Agrippa who was determined not only to persecute the Christians but indeed annihilate them. James was undaunted when confronted with his impending death; when he was brought to the place of martyrdom, he continued to preach and exhort those

around. His main accuser was so moved by the Apostle's conviction, this man repented and fell down at James' feet! Then, both men were beheaded at the same time!

Philip

Born at Bethsaida, in Galilee, he was one of the first to be called 'disciple'. He labored for Christ throughout Upper Asia and suffered martyrdom at Heliopolis, in Phrygia. He was scourged, thrown into prison and then crucified.

Matthew

Matthew was the tax collector that left all when Jesus simply said 'Follow me.' He was born at Nazareth. He wrote all of his gospel in Hebrew, but thanks to James, Jesus' brother (actually step-brother), the Gospel of Matthew was translated into Greek. Matthew labored for our Lord in Parthia, and Ethiopia where he suffered his death being slain by chopping apart by halberd.

James (the Less)

This disciple of Christ. He was the head of all the Churches of Jerusalem and the author of the Epistle in the New Testament bearing his name. At the age of 94, he was beaten and stoned by the Jews, still not dying they bashed his brains out with a club.

Matthias

Less is known about him than most of the other disciples, but he was elected to fill the place of Judas. He was stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded.

Andrew

He was the brother of Peter. He preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations; but when he arrived at Odessa, he was seized and crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed transversely in the ground.

Mark

Mark was a Jew, born of the tribe of Levi. Very important tribe in the Jewish nation. He was converted to Christianity by Peter. In conjunction with Peter, he wrote the Gospel of Mark in the Greek language (instead of Hebrew which was his natural tongue). Mark was literally dragged and torn to pieces by the people of Alexandria.

Peter

The blessed Apostle Peter, the one whose testimony Jesus declared to build his Church upon, was condemned to death at Rome by Nero. However, Peter had several, indeed

many opportunities to escape. Many offered Peter refuge. He refused all. He asked that he be crucified with his head down and his feet upward, he being unworthy to be crucified in the same form and manner as the Lord.

Paul

Paul also suffered persecution and ultimately death under the hand of Nero. Two messengers of Nero, Ferega and Parthemius, were dispatched to Paul to tell him of his impending death. When they got to Paul, he was preaching the Word of God and instructing people in the way of the Lord; these messengers indicated that they too wanted to believe and wanted Paul to lead them in prayer. As Paul bowed in prayer, they beheaded him.

Jude

The brother of James was commonly called Thaddeus. He was crucified at Odessa.

Bartholomew

He preached in many countries, often translating the Gospel into the native language, including India where he was cruelly beaten and crucified.

Thomas

Also called Didymus, preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, where the pagan priests killed him by thrusting a spear through him.

Luke

The evangelist and author of the Gospel that carries his name. He traveled with Paul through various countries. He was hanged to death from an olive tree in Greece.

Simon

Preached the Gospel in Africa and even Great Britain, where he was crucified.

John

The 'beloved disciple' was a brother to James (the Great). He founded many Churches, including Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Thyatira. Captured at Ephesus, he was taken to Rome where he was put into a cauldron of hot, boiling oil. By a miracle of God, he was taken out without any injury! Domitian immediately banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where John wrote the book of Revelation. He is the only disciple of Christ to escape violent death.

What does Freedom look like?

Freedom looks like this!

Matthew 27:27-46

²⁷Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole Roman cohort around Him. ²⁸They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. ²⁹And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰They spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head. ³¹After they had mocked Him, they took the scarlet robe off Him and put His own garments back on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

As they were coming out, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon, whom they pressed into service to bear His cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull, they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink. And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots. And sitting down, they began to keep watch over Him there. And above His head they put up the charge against Him which read, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." At that time two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left. And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him and saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him. "HE TRUSTS IN GOD; LET GOD RESCUE Him now, IF HE DELIGHTS IN HIM; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" The robbers who had been crucified with Him were also insulting Him with the same words. Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

In Matthew 28:1-6 we also read:

¹Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. ²And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. ³And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. ⁵The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. ⁶"He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.

This is what real freedom looks like.

What does Freedom look like for you?

Paul said in Romans 3:23 “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” In 6:23 it says “³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Because of our sins we are slaves to sin, but through Christ Jesus, we are set free.

Jesus said, “If the Son has set you free, you are free indeed!

AMEN