

1. We are going to continue talking this morning about our year of Jubilee.
2. However, we are going to change gears this morning.
3. Up to this point we have been talking mostly about areas where the Lord wants to bring restoration and freedom, but today I want us to consider not only how to be set free, but also how to stay free.
4. In the Old Testament, God established for the nation of Israel a year of jubilee every 50 years.
5. In the 50<sup>th</sup> year, all lands and properties that had been sold would revert back to the original owner. And anyone who had sold themselves to someone else as a servant would be granted their freedom.
6. Every 50 years there was renewal and restoration to how God intended things and people's lives to be.
7. But in the case of servants who were set free, just because they were granted freedom didn't necessarily mean that they would stay free.
8. There is a big difference between being granted freedom and knowing how to live a free life.
9. We see this numerous times in the history of the nation of Israel.
10. Because of their sin and disobedience, God would allow the people to be controlled and dominated by the nations around them.
11. They would cry out and repent of their sins, and God would free them from the bondage they were in.
12. But time and time again, the people went back to doing the very things that caused them to be in bondage in the first place, and before long they had lost their freedom again.
13. I hate to say it, but thousands of years later we aren't any better.
14. We can be given the greatest freedom we have ever known, but if we don't know what is required to stay free, more times than not we will wind up in bondage all over again.
15. So, this morning, let's look at the kind of freedom we have been given, and then let's consider how we can live this life of freedom out on a daily basis.

**TEXT:** **Galatians 5:1** *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (NIV)*

**TITLE:** **Free to be free**

**INTRO:**

1. The other day I was reading a publication that talked about the overcrowding problem that our nation faces in its prison system. The article quoted a statistic that said that **65% of prisoners who serve their time** and are released from prison **will become a repeat offender in 5 years or less** and will have to be placed back in prison.
2. 65% of those who serve their time and gain their freedom will choose to do something that sends them back to prison. They will leave their life of freedom to go back to a life of bondage.
3. When I read the statistic, the picture formed in my mind of a door leading out of the prison.
4. What should have been a joyous occasion, (the release of the prisoners) was marked by sadness, because 2 out of every 3 prisoners being released were still in chains. They were still in bondage. They had been granted their freedom, but they were no more free than if they were still behind bars.
5. The apostle Paul is the writer of the book of Galatians, and he is writing a letter to the church in Galatia.
6. In the beginning of chapter 5 Paul makes one of the most profound statements I have read in a long time.
7. **Galatians 5:1** *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free."* In other words, the purpose for freedom is to be free.
8. I want to carry that just a little bit further by stating it this way. "The purpose for being set free is so that we can live free."
9. To be set free is an event. To live free is something that takes place day after day after day.
10. Paul goes on to illustrate what he is trying to say. He says in the last part of **Galatians 5:1** *"Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."*
11. Now the word slavery is a word that we talk about from time to time, but it is a word that we do not fully understand because we have not lived in an era of slavery.

12. However, at the time Paul was writing this letter slavery was something that was very common. The people of Galatia understood well the concept of slavery.
13. Paul says you have been set free, so don't put on again the yoke of slavery.
14. Paul is imagining in his mind a freed slave. The price has been paid for freedom. The slave has been set free and his chains have been removed. What is before this slave is the choice to live a life of freedom. But Paul imagines this slave looking around and instead of choosing to live a life of freedom, he goes and sells himself again into bondage.
15. What Paul is saying is the purpose for freedom is freedom. The purpose for being set free is to live free.
16. You see it seemed strange to Paul, and it seems strange to us that a slave who had been set free would choose to go back to a life of bondage and slavery.
17. It seems logical to us that once a person has tasted freedom that they would want to continue to live in freedom.
18. That would seem logical, but you know in my life I have learned that wanting to live free, and actually living free are two very different things.
19. Maybe you are here this morning and you have never been a physical slave, but the truth is you are no more free than a literal slave.
20. Maybe you do a good job of hiding your chains, but the truth is you have not felt freedom for a very long time.
20. What do the chains that are binding you look like?
  - a. **Fear.** Fear of failure. Fear of the unknown. Fear of death. Fear of the future.
  - b. **Guilt.** Guilt over mistakes you have made. Guilt over people you have hurt. Guilt over opportunities you have blown.
  - c. **Anger.** Rage. Inability to control your emotions. Hurtful words. Physical abuse.
  - d. **Addiction.** Addiction to drugs. Addiction to alcohol. Addiction to pornography. Addiction to prescription medication. Addiction to impure thoughts. Addiction to impure relationships.
  - e. **Emotional bondage.** Maybe you were emotionally abused by a parent, by a spouse, or by someone else who took advantage of

you. Maybe you have been trying all of your adult life to free yourself from the emotional pain and baggage that weighs you down.

21. You see I have found over the years, as I have studied my own life and the life of others, you don't have to physically have chains on your hands or on your feet to feel and be bound. (pause)
22. There is another area of our lives that is just as important if not more important and that is spiritual bondage.
23. You see, you and I were created as spiritual beings as well as physical beings.
24. Yes, we were created to live in a physical world and have relationships with real people and experience real things.
25. But we were also created to connect to a spiritual world and have a real relationship with a real God who can do real miracles in our lives.
26. But there are chains that bind us. There are chains that hand cuff us. There are chains that separate us from God and the name of those chains is called sin.
27. So many in our world today recognize that there are great and various ways to be in bondage, and many well-intentioned organizations have come up with detailed plans and programs that attempt to free people from the chains that bind them, but any plan or program that doesn't begin with the sinfulness of man, and deal with the bondage of sin I believe will ultimately fail.
28. There is only one remedy for the chains that bind us, there is only one key to the hand cuffs that tie us down, there is only one answer for spiritual bondage and his name is Jesus.
29. It is only by our acceptance of what Jesus did on the cross. It is only by our belief that Jesus took the penalty and the guilt and the shame that should have been mine, and receiving him as the Lord of our life that we will ever experience freedom.
30. Freedom begins with Jesus.
31. I don't know about you this morning, but I want to be free.
32. We don't have to passively put up with bondage, we don't have to just settle for a life of sin, we don't have to submit to a life of spiritual and physical bondage, we have a choice. The choice is Jesus.

33. In the book of Romans chapter 6 Paul is writing a letter to the Roman church of that day. In verses 19 – 23 Paul spells out so clearly the choice that each of us have. Paul brings to light the contrasts between a life of bondage and sin, and a life of freedom.
34. I want to read these verses out of “The Message bible”, because I believe it captures exactly the message God has for us. **Romans 6:19-23** You can readily recall, can't you, how at one time the more you did just what you felt like doing--not caring about others, not caring about God--the worse your life became and the less freedom you had? And how much different is it now as you live in God's freedom, your lives healed and expansive in holiness? **20** As long as you did what you felt like doing, ignoring God, you didn't have to bother with right thinking or right living, or right anything for that matter. **21** But do you call that a free life? What did you get out of it? Nothing you're proud of now. Where did it get you? A dead end. **22** But now that you've found you don't have to listen to sin tell you what to do, and have discovered the delight of listening to God telling you, what a surprise! A whole, healed, put-together life right now, with more and more of life on the way! **23** Work hard for sin your whole life and your pension is death. But God's gift is real life, eternal life, delivered by Jesus, our Master. (MSG)
35. I want to look at three aspects of freedom that the apostle Paul offers us in Christ Jesus.

## The Purpose of Freedom – Real Life

1. In the New International Version **Romans 6:23** “*For the wages of sin is death.*” In other words, the paycheck for sin is death.
2. The message bible says in **Romans 6:23** “*Work hard for sin your whole life and your pension is death.*” *But God's gift is real life.*
3. What a choice. Sin makes you work and sweat and wear yourself out and the end result is death, which is the ultimate bondage, but God says I will give you, as a gift, free of charge, life, which is the ultimate freedom.
4. I believe there is a great misconception in our world today. Many people believe that having a relationship with Jesus is the bondage. That If I have a relationship with Jesus then I will have to conform and live by all these rules and regulations and that will cramp my style, slow me down.
5. The Christian life is not about rules and regulations, it's about freedom.
6. I heard a quote about 6 months ago that I don't think I will ever forget. It says, “Rules without relationship bring rebellion, but rules with relationship bring reward.”



6. I believe God has got that kind of life planned for you and I. I believe he wants us to wake up in the morning and say, 'mmmmmmmmmm life is good.
7. God has designed life to be pleasurable. He didn't design life to be all bound and chained, he wants us to enjoy life.
8. Paul mentions here **three types of pleasurable life**.
  - a. **Whole life.** Not shattered, not broken, not incomplete, not partial but whole.
  - b. Another word for whole is complete, full, perfect, well rounded, total and undivided. Whole life.
9. **Healed life.** Not sick, not unhealthy, but healed life.
  - a. Another word for healed is cured, fit, hearty, recovered, right, robust, sane, sound, strong, well and wholesome. Healed life.
10. **Put-together life.** Not scattered, not dispersed, not disconnected, not dismantled, not separate, not apart, but put-together life.
  - a. I don't know about you but that sounds like mmmmm life to me.
  - b. But as if that wasn't enough Paul takes it one step further. He says in the last part of **Romans 6:22** *A whole, healed, put-together life right now, with more and more of life on the way!* More and more on the way? How could here be more?
11. I have found that just when you think God can't get any better there is more.
12. Gods design for us is to life a life of pleasure. To have a pleasurable, free life.
13. The third aspect of freedom that Paul offers is...

## **The Persistency of Freedom.**

1. I love this definition of the word **persistent**: persisting, esp. in spite of opposition, obstacles, or discouragement. Lasting or enduring tenaciously. Constantly repeated; continued or permanent.
2. **Galatians 5:1** It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (NIV)
3. Jesus Christ doesn't offer us a freedom that only lasts for a day, or a week, or a month, He offers us a persistent freedom.
4. A freedom that persists in spite of opposition, obstacles, or discouragement.

5. He offers us a freedom that is lasting. A freedom that endures tenaciously.
6. He offers us a freedom that is constant and permanent.
7. He offers us freedom from fear, guilt, anger, addiction, emotional bondage, and spiritual bondage.

Conclusion:

1. Doesn't that sound like the kind of freedom you want? It's the kind of freedom I want.
2. And Jesus is the only source of freedom. It is through the blood of Jesus on the cross that we are given freedom.
3. But the way that we live out freedom every single day comes from something else.
4. The only way we can stay free is by submitting to the Holy Spirit, every single day.
5. Jesus gives us freedom and the Holy Spirit helps us maintain freedom.
6. John 14:15-17 "If you [really] love Me, you will keep and obey My commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor--Counselor, Strengthener, Standby), to be with you forever-- 17 the Spirit of Truth... (AMP)
7. The Holy Spirit helps us obey God's commands which allows us to live in freedom.
8. I chose the amplified bible for this passage because it explains how the Holy Spirit helps us.
9. He comforts us in time of trouble.
10. He advocates for us. An advocate is someone who supports another.
11. He is our intercessor. He is continually before the throne of God asking God to help us live in freedom.
12. He is our counselor. He shows us the right way to go and points out the wrong way to go.
13. He is our strengthener.
14. He is our standby. He never leaves our side. He is always with us.
15. But with all of the ability and power the Holy Spirit possesses, he will not force himself upon us.
16. We have to voluntarily submit to Him and willingly follow him.
17. So, freedom is given to us by accepting what Jesus did on the cross.
18. And freedom is maintained by submitting to the work of the Holy Spirit in our daily life.

19. This morning I want to give you the opportunity to do both of those things.
20. Pray.
21. Salvation call.
22. (Respond. Get out of seat.) I am willing to submit and surrender to the Holy Spirit.
23. I give up my right to lead. BTW, my leading led me to bondage.
24. And I submit to His leading in my life.
25. Lead in prayer of submission.