

If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Reformation Sunday) is John 8:31-36. Jesus is speaking within the context of the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2–8:59), which commemorated Israel's sojourn in the wilderness after having been freed from the slavery of Egypt.

Jesus spoke to those who believed while, apparently the unbelieving Jews were listening too. The tender faith of those new believers needed strengthening.

Jesus speaks directly to those "*Jews who had believed in him, 'If you abide in my word.'*" *Abide* means to remain in, to live in, and to dwell in. "*In my word*" is where the true disciple of Jesus needs to remain.

To "know" means more than intellectual apprehension. Much more is involved (7:17), namely the knowledge derived from a living experience with the blessed power of the truth.

Only in Jesus and His teaching will anyone be free from sin, death, and Satan's rule, and thus free to serve God with a pure heart. In contrast, Judaism taught that study of God's Law made a person free. (TLSB)

The Jews insist that they are "offspring of Abraham [belonging to the covenant] and have never been enslaved to anyone." How ironic, since they were at that moment subject to Roman occupation!

Jesus defines the reality of slavery and freedom in terms of spiritual status (condition). To be a slave is to have a lord who governs and directs. Those who sin have sin as their lord. Here it is not so much a question of sinful acts as it is of the condition of will and heart, which is sinful and therefore sins.

A slave can never be sure of present or future status. Only the Son, Jesus Christ, can bring genuine freedom and make us children of God through faith. (TLSB)

"As Christ says, [baptized people] have been made free again. Therefore, they are able not only to hear the Word, but also to agree with it and accept it, although in great weakness." (FC SD II 67) (TLSB)

In our baptism, we have renounced the devil and all his works. At that baptism our church family pledged to surround us with spiritual resources. Each Christian church offers Sunday and weekday learning opportunities. As we take advantage of our church's Word and Sacraments, Jesus the Son sets us free and continues keep us free from the ravages of sin.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus Son of God thank you for recusing me from the consequences of our sin. Help us to continue in your Word until the day of eternity. Amen