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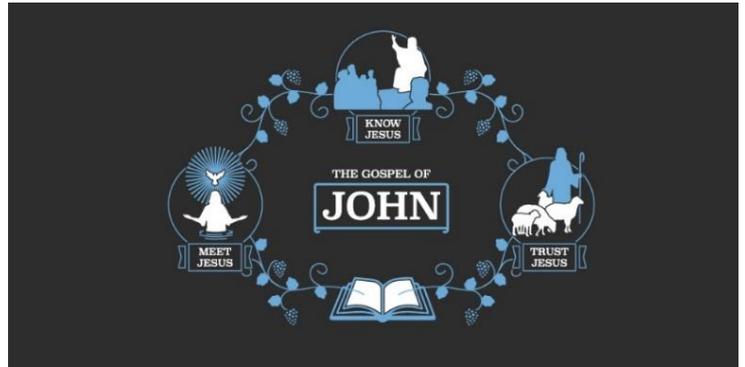
The Envy of the World: To Be Free!

The Gospel of John

John 8:31–59

Tim Badal | January 23, 2022

We've been in a series where we've come to meet Jesus and learn from Him, in order that we might believe and trust in Jesus. That's my prayer, that our trust and belief in Jesus would only continue to grow as we seek to understand what He has to say and discern what He has done for us.



Today we find ourselves in John 8:31-59. Jesus is now in Jerusalem, celebrating the Festival of the Booths, or the Tabernacles. He has used different activities during this celebration to draw out teachings. He spoke of how He was the living water, like a priest would take water during this festival and pour it on the altar. Jesus said, "Come to Me and you'll never thirst again." Then on the evening of the last day of the festival, they would light torches to remind them of how God led them in the wilderness. Jesus told them, "I am the light of the world."

What they were mainly celebrating during this week-long event was their independence. They were celebrating no longer being slaves in Egypt. They were thanking and praising God for providing and caring for them during their great exodus out of slavery and into the Promised Land. It was on that theme that Jesus uttered the words that will serve as our rudder this morning, as we watch Him engage with yet another group of people. What He wanted to teach them—and us today—was that in Him real freedom can be found.

Freedom can mean different things to different people. To kids, freedom means being an adult and not being told what to do, when to go to bed, what games they can play. For a teenager, freedom is keys and driver's license, so they can go places with their friends. For mom, freedom is a babysitter, or a non-deadbeat dad, to watch the kids so she can get away for a couple hours. For employees, freedom is the weekend away from work and all its demands. For a teacher, freedom is summer break—no classes, no students. For a prisoner, freedom is saying goodbye to the jail cell and hello to opportunity.

You see, we live in a world where we long for freedom. What Jesus is going to say today is that true freedom can be found in Him. We need to understand the kind of freedom He's speaking about in our passage this morning. As Americans, we hold freedom in such high regard. Our country was founded on freedom. The revolutionaries who fought against the tyranny of Great Britain had a motto that said, "Don't tread on me." In other words, "Don't tread on my freedom; if you do, you will feel the full brunt of my defense, because my freedom is so important and such a part of my existence that I will fight tooth and nail to keep it."

It seems odd that we would talk about Jesus telling us, a group of freed people, how to find freedom. But I'm here to tell you that was the same argument the Jewish people gave Him. They said, "Why are You talking about freedom? We've never been enslaved." It would be easy for us as Americans to say, "We've never been enslaved, so why would we turn to Jesus to find freedom? We have that in our Constitution. We have that in our Bill of Rights. We have that in our Declaration of Independence."

I want you to see this morning that the freedom Jesus is talking about transcends all other freedoms. How badly we as a people need to hear what He is telling us. Some of those who attended earlier services told me, "I needed that. I did not know how much I was in bondage." Now in this service, my hope and prayer is that you too will listen to the Word of God this morning and that in doing so, you might find the freedom you're looking for.

Let's define freedom by starting with what it isn't. It's not physical freedom. What I mean by that is here in America, we enjoy the freedom to live our lives, have jobs, make money, go where we want, worship whomever we desire, raise our kids. We have freedom across the board. Jesus is not talking about political freedom here. That is so far from what He's talking about. Let's face it, we've got the most freedom of any people on earth, yet we are in bondage.

Let's talk about financial freedom. We are the richest people in the world. We have the ability to make and spend money. We can moan and criticize having to pay taxes, but let's face it, the majority of the money we make can be spent however we want. We can spend our money on homes, cars, clothing, technology. We can waste our money. We can save our money. We can invest our money. We can give our money away. We are financially free. Yet there are a great many people in financial bondage.

Let's talk sexual freedom. When it comes to our sexual nature, we live in a day when we can do what we want, when we want, how we want. We can love any way we desire. We can marry, divorce, remarry without any government retribution. We can sleep with whomever we want. We can do whatever we want in that arena. It is "no holds barred." We are as free sexually as we've ever been as a society. Yet, I can't tell you how many people are sexually in bondage.

How about emotional freedom? We've been given by our founding fathers the right, privilege and liberty to be happy, but very few of us are. We're anxious. We're depressed. We're burdened. We're angry. We're hopeless. So in a world of emotional freedom, we find ourselves in bondage.

If it's not those things that Jesus is talking about, what is He talking about? The answer is spiritual freedom. You think spiritual freedom becomes one of these silos of freedoms—no, my friends. This is the overarching freedom that brings freedom, as it trickles down, to all the other things I just spoke about. Do you want emotional freedom? Do you want sexual freedom? Do you want financial freedom? Do you want relational freedom? Do you want political freedom? All of these come first and foremost by finding spiritual freedom in Christ. Once we come to a place where we know we've been made free by our heavenly Father, then we are in fact free indeed in all these other ways.

So let's define some terms this morning. First, what is spiritual freedom? I scoured many places looking for a definition of spiritual freedom, especially that would line up with what we're learning in our text today. Eventually, instead of just continuing to search for an exact definition, it came to me that maybe I needed to just write a definition myself to help us understand what God in Christ is talking about. Here's what I came up with. Spiritual freedom is finding your identity in Christ. It is trading your sin and guilt for His forgiveness and grace. It is trading the lies of the devil, this world and our flesh for the truth of God's Word. It is trading your flawed perspective regarding the events and emotions of life for God's flawless perspective. It is trading your constant struggle in life for the abundant life that only God can give.

Now, this freedom enables us to be who we were truly created to be. Spiritual freedom means I'm a recipient of God's love. It allows me to experience that love in greater measure, then in turn, I'm now free to love my heavenly Father and others as Christ did. This freedom allows me to experience the fruit of the Spirit—goodness, peace, patience, kindness and all the other ones—that comes in ever-growing measure and ever-growing quality. This brings me great hope and security, both in this life and in the life to come. That's what God longs for us. He longs for us to trade our sin and guilt for forgiveness and grace, to trade the lies of the devil, the world and the flesh for the truth of God's Word. To trade our flawed perspective to get God's flawless perspective. It's trading our struggle for abundance for true abundance.

Have you experienced this freedom? Are you experiencing this freedom? I want you to dig down and ask yourself if you are truly free. I love what Dr. Tony Evans says in his book [Free At Last](#): "God is saying to us all, 'Bring Me your pain, your depression, your guilt, your failure, your discouragement, your anxiety, your addictions. Bring Me your broken homes, your rebellious children, your messed up marriages. Bring me your sin and your circumstances from every ocean and continent of your existence.'"

That means go as far as you have to, from the very depths and very breadth of who you are, and make sure you bring everything to God. God is calling His people to break the chains of tyranny. Here's why. Bondage to sin, bondage to the things we struggle with, is totally incongruous with our life in Christ, the One Who said, "*You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free...So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed*" (John 8:32, 36).

Therefore, by freedom, Tony Evans says, "I mean being free from anyone or anything other than Christ that is controlling your life. Free from the need to pop that pill, take that drink, look at that pornography, buy that lottery ticket, or do anything else to deaden the pain of a life held in spiritual bondage."

Before we move to his final statement, these things are impossible for you and me to do. You and I will never accomplish this on our own. That's why I love how he concludes: "It's a tall order." If you have ever been in bondage, then you have experienced—and I've experienced this myself—that when we fall into the lies of the devil, it seems impossible to get out. That's why we must fall at the feet of Jesus. He is the only way these things can be overcome.

So we need to turn to Jesus and say, "We who are slaves to sin..." But if you say, "Wait a minute, I'm not a slave to sin," that's what the people said to Jesus as well. If you practice sin, you are a slave to sin.

Let's do some "slave inventory." Did you sin last week? How about last month? How about last year? If you say yes, then you're a slave to sin. If you say no, then you don't need Jesus. If you can say that today, you don't need what I'm going to tell you, so you don't need what God's going to tell us. I just say, "Good luck on the day of judgment."

I'm going to assume the Bible is right when it says, "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23), therefore all of us—man, woman, child, old and young, rich and poor, religious or not—all of us are slaves to sin. So if that's true, then we are in bondage. But Jesus has come, He's rattling the keys and He's saying, "I can set you free. I can release you from your jail cell. For that to happen, you must give your life to Me."

How do we go about doing this? In John 7, Jesus tells us that He is living water. In chapter eight, He tells us He is the light of the world. Now, at the end of chapter eight, Jesus says, "I am true freedom." How do we get this true freedom? The first answer is going to be so elementary, but as you begin to see how it fleshes out in the text, you'll say, "That totally makes sense." How do we go about finding this freedom?

Freedom comes by following Christ as our Savior.

Number one, we follow Christ as our Savior. Well, duh. Of course that's the case. But what does it mean to follow Jesus Christ? Let's get into our text. John 8:31 says, "*So Jesus said to the Jews...*" Not the Pharisees, not the chief priests, not the religious leaders, but to the Jews "...who had believed him." Go back to verse 30. "*As he was saying these things, many believed in him.*" So Jesus said to those who believed in Him the following: "*If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*" While Jesus was arguing and debating with the Pharisees, a group of people began to say, "Hey, I like what Jesus is saying. This is making sense." Jesus then turned His attention to these people whom John now calls believers.

We need to be careful about this term "believers." We might immediately assume they were Christians, but if that's the case, then what happens next shows them to be the craziest and wackiest new believers class in history. Here's how Jesus starts. "All right, all of you. Welcome to the New Christian Class. Let me tell you a little bit about yourself. First, you shouldn't be assured of any salvation." "Why not, Jesus?" "Because I'm going to add in verse 31 the conditional clause of 'if.'" "Wait a minute, I thought we were in." "No, if you do some things, you're in. But you guys can't even listen to My word; you can't bear it (verse 43). By the way, you're children of the devil (verse 44). And you're not of God (verse 47). And by the way, y'all are a bunch of liars" (verse 55).

So this is how Jesus goes about bringing these "new believers" into fellowship with Him? Maybe He got them wrong? Maybe He was misreading the group? No, He isn't. Notice in verse 41 how the "new believers" first respond to Him. They're essentially calling Jesus' mother Mary a whore. "At least we weren't born of sexual immorality." Of course, these weren't the first people to say that. "That whole virgin birth thing is a crock. Your mother was promiscuous. She doesn't know who the dad is, so they came up with this God story, but nobody's buying it, except You." Let me tell you, if you bring my mother into a discussion like this, I'll get angry. Jesus didn't like what He was hearing.

Then in verse 48 they say, "Hey, You're a Samaritan." That's really calling someone out in those days. That's the worst thing you could call a Jewish man. Then they do the unthinkable, saying to the Son of God, "You are demon possessed. The devil is inside you" (verse 48). Then they say, "You're not only not greater, You're lesser than Abraham and the prophets—even though You say, 'Before Abraham, I was.'" They don't believe He's eternal. They mock the idea that He could live forever in verse 57. Finally, when the class is finishing, they pick up rocks in verse 59 to stone Him.

Do you see how weird this "new believers class" is? Can you at least give an amen to that this morning, church? It's crazy. What we have here is a group of people who went halfway with Jesus, but they didn't go the full hundred yards. Like many in our culture, they liked certain things about Jesus, but when the rubber meets the road, they backed off. And they didn't just back off and get quiet; they got angry. "Wait a minute. If that's what it means to follow You, I want nothing to do with it."

What does this have to do with our main topic of freedom? Unless you take all of Jesus, you will never experience the freedom you're looking for. Let me say that again. Unless you're willing to take all of Jesus, you will never experience all the freedom you're looking for. Some of us have Jesus as kind of our copilot. We like what Jesus has to say about this and this and this. "So why isn't it that I'm not experiencing freedom in these areas?" Well, you've only gone halfway with Jesus, so your spirit is in this quasi-freedom that's really not freedom at all.

What does Jesus say? He says to this group of people who "believe," who give tacit approval to the things He was saying, that there is a condition. It's a condition each of us, as professors of Christ, would also be wise to understand. Notice verse 31. "Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.'" Not superficially, not falsely, but truly. Therefore, to experience freedom, to experience Christ, means we have to follow Him. We have to abide in Him. When some of you see this word "follow," right away you think you understand it. You're on Twitter, so you know what it means to follow someone. I'm on Twitter and follow hundreds of people. Following on Twitter means when someone says something and I receive it. It comes on my feed, then I can read it. I don't have to agree with it. I don't have to do anything with it. I can scroll right by it. But it's there. Some of us are approaching Jesus with the idea that He's there, but I can take or leave what He says. I don't have to tell anybody about it. I don't have to change my life.

There are other features on Twitter. I can take what someone has said, hit the little heart button and say, "I really like that. I like that a lot." I can also retweet, taking what someone I'm following has said and I can share it with others. I think there are far too many of us—maybe even here today—who follow Jesus like they follow people on Twitter. You can take or leave what He says. You're glad He's there and you want Him in the newsfeed. If you like what He says, you can give a heart to that, but you don't have to. If you want to, maybe you'll share a little something with someone that He's said.

When Jesus says, "I want you to follow Me," you have to understand who He's talking to. It would be helpful to underline "*...to the Jews...*" in verse 31. What did the Jews know about following? Well, if you harken back to the first part of the Gospel of John, Jesus said, "Come and follow Me." Who was He saying that to? It was to His disciples. To follow someone in the Jewish culture referred to when a rabbi would call students to learn from him by following him. We see in the disciples' response to Jesus that they left everything to follow Him. Essentially Jesus is saying to these Jews in our text today, "If you are going to truly be My disciple, you have to leave everything else."

Jesus isn't here today like He was with His disciples back then. Do we need to leave our jobs or our homes, as those disciples did? The answer is no. What Jesus is saying to us today is that He must become the priority over everything else in our lives: our job, our earthly relationships, our pursuits and dreams. We need to leave these just as the disciples left their nets on the seashore so they could follow Jesus.

What did it mean, then, that they were going to follow this rabbi? It meant they would sit under His teaching, living life with Him until their lives and His teaching were so indistinguishable from each other that people could say to them, "You are a follower of Jesus." So to be a follower of Jesus is to sit under Jesus' teaching and to live following His model—talking as He talks, interacting with people as He interacts with people, addressing issues and struggles as He would address them. It means watching Him model how to live life. You do this until people can say of you, like people would say of my relationship with my father, "You're a chip off the old block. You sound like him, you act like him, you talk like him, you respond like him—you are just like him." That's why I think it's such a wonderful picture in the book of Acts when Christians were called Nazarenes. They were just like that Nazarene Rabbi. They talked like Him, they did what He did—they were just like Him.

Let me ask, as a people who are enslaved, are you following Jesus? Are you just going back in history and saying, as I could, "Yeah, I did that back when I was a little kid. I did that in 1984. I did it after a young girl in my Sunday school class came to class all excited and said, 'I'm a follower of Jesus. I've brought Jesus into my heart.'" I thought, "Wait a minute. I know adults talk that way, but now this kid's talking this way? What's this all about?" I remember being really anxious all the way home because I wanted to ask my dad about this. I got some alone time with him and said, "This girl said this and I don't know what to make of it."

Dad very clearly and passionately shared the gospel with me. He said that in Christ, I will find what my heart was looking for. I didn't understand what all the longings of the human heart would mean. I was seven years old. But I understood what my dad said; I knew that's what he and my mom believed, so that was good enough for me. I was going to put my faith and trust in Jesus. So I knelt down by that bed and prayed. I asked for forgiveness and was so thankful to receive the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.

Listen to me, friends. If you have to harken back to being a little kid, getting on your knees and saying some words, you will not find freedom today. Freedom is you getting up every day, just as the seven-year-old version of me did, and saying what I said. Today at 45 years of age, I get up every morning and say, "God, forgive me. God, cleanse me. God, lead me. God, help me. God, free me." Even though I stumble and fail, often finding myself wandering from the truth, God's presence and freedom continues to be available to me.

The first step to freedom is making Christ your Savior. Have you done that? I don't mean just uttering some words; I mean truly making it your priority to follow Jesus. Jesus said this in Matthew 16:24: *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself."* Are you doing that? Is part and parcel of your existence in relationship with Jesus Christ? You will never experience true and lasting freedom until you follow Christ as Savior.

Freedom comes by fighting against the devil's schemes.

You might say, "Okay, Tim, in all honesty, I've done that and I'm still in bondage." Yep, you could still be in bondage. So let's talk about the next thing. Finding freedom involves fighting against the devil's schemes. Midway into this passage there is a lot going on. Bantering is taking place. Abraham is brought up. Being in bondage or not is mentioned. All of sudden, in verse 44, Jesus says, *"You are of the father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth."* Notice the dichotomy there? Jesus says, "I am the truth, but the devil has nothing to do with the truth because there is no truth in him."

Jesus is explaining something to us that we need to be reminded of—there is no truth in the devil. "When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." He can't do anything but lie. Three times we are told where the devil has power.

A couple weeks ago I was teaching my theology class here on Sunday night, and the subject was the attributes of God. We looked at how God is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. The question came up, "What about the devil?" Well, the devil is none of those things. He doesn't know all things, he isn't all powerful, and he can't be everywhere at once. He's not omnipresent.

Unfortunately, in that class, there are many who have come to believe things about the devil that just are not true. I want to bring you freedom, because I think there are many who think the reason their lives stink is because the devil did it. Listen to me. The devil didn't do it. However the devil did sell you a bill of goods. He lied. The devil is a liar.

I'm going to show you here in the next few minutes how the devil uses lies to get you to do things that put you in bondage.

First, financial bondage. The devil can't steal your money. The devil can't go in and hack your electronic banking site. He doesn't have power or permission to go there. He can't take your money. You should never go to your account, see that money is missing, and say, "It's the devil!" He can't do that. Nowhere in the Bible does it say he has that kind of power.

He knows that, friends. He says, "Since I can't take their money single-handedly, you know what I can do? I can tell lies. I can tell them about an invisible family called the Joneses. I can tell them they're falling behind the Joneses. The Joneses have a nicer house, nicer cars, better kids. I can build the case about the Joneses. I can use advertisements and other things to deceive them."

The devil is a broadcaster of lies. Maybe he will say, "If you don't have that certain possession, you'll never be happy." So you know what we do? We start giving the devil our money and putting ourselves into financial bondage. We buy things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like. We buy into the lie.

The devil can't take your money, friends, but he can lie to you, then you'll give him your money. When you have no money, you can't provide for your family and you're in debt up to your eyeballs, you cannot say, "The devil did it to me." All you can say is, "I bought into his lies and I want to be set free."

Let's keep going. How about emotional bondage? The devil tells us, "God is not for you. Even if God is for you, the problems and circumstances of your life are bigger than He can handle. He isn't the God He says He is, because He can't deal with what makes you anxious or what makes you depressed. You've got to figure this out on my own."

The devil tried to convince us that we were never created to figure these things out on our own. So then a tidal wave of anxiety and depression robs us of our peace and joy, rising to a fever pitch where we can't find any kind of freedom. Listen to me—the

devil can't mess with your emotions, but he can tell you lies and you can start believing those lies. When you do, you can start thinking things about yourself that will be destructive to your ability to find peace and joy. So you're in bondage.

Let's keep going. What about sexual bondage? The devil lies. He says monogamy is boring. To be involved in a fruitful sexual relationship with a spouse as God has prescribed in Scripture is old fashioned. The devil says—we see this all over the air waves and on our phones—, "Have lots of partners. Have it when you want it and how you want it. There are zero boundaries with sex. Free sex is yours to have." Even those who are in relationships are told they're not getting enough sex. The devil then says, "Don't look to your spouse for your sexual needs, go to the internet. There's all manner of stuff you can look at there. It's great." So you go there and buy the lie. You find yourself in bed with someone else. You find yourself looking at other things. That's all great until those fake relationships ruin your present marriage.

There are sexually transmitted diseases that will impact your health. Past loves and relationships can bring great shame. Did the devil throw you into the arms of that other person? Did the devil force you to have that affair? Did the devil force you to go to those websites? The answer is no. The devil doesn't have that power, but he can get you to believe a lie.

We're falling for these lies, church, over and over and over again. We might say, "The devil made me do it." No, he didn't! The devil isn't powerful like God is. God can make us do things if He wants to, but the devil cannot. All the devil can do is set the trap and he does. Listen, church, because we're slaves to sin, we fall for it every single time.

Let me add one more because it's in our text—religious bondage. Religion can be the greatest lie the devil tells, taking good people, even "clean" people, and making them think they're saved. They come to church. They get baptized. They give to the church. They do the list of do's and don'ts. They have it locked in. "If you do that, you're good, you're clean," the devil says.

"Wait a minute," the Pharisees said, "we're descendants of Abraham, check one. We're part of the nation of Israel, check two. We're followers of the law of Moses, check three. We're good. We're not slaves to sin." Jesus says, "You are slaves. You are in bondage."

Listen, there are people in churches today—and maybe you're here today—who have fallen for the devil's lies. "I'm doing what my mom and dad did. They were faithful people and if they can do it, I can do it. I'm not really here because of a relationship; I'm here because I want to check it off my list." If this is how you think, you have bought into a lie. Religion will never save you and give you freedom. Let me say this without being too simplistic and naïve. I think the majority of our heartache, pain and suffering in this life comes from falling for the lies of the devil.

If you say, "No, Tim, you don't understand. I'm a victim of my circumstances." That's fine. You and God can figure that out. I'm not omniscient. But I'm going to tell you, as I look at heartaches in my life, I can go back and see a straight line—not a dotted line, not a squiggly line—a straight line to a lie I bought from the devil and chose with my own volition to follow him instead of following the truth of the living God.

In these arenas, and in so many more, if we would just hearken back to that initial lie, we would see that we are being sold a bill of goods. So what do we do? How do we find freedom? "Tim, I don't feel very free at all right now." Where do we find freedom?

Freedom comes by faithfully living out the Scriptures.

We need to follow Jesus as our Savior, fight the schemes of the devil and faithfully live out the Scriptures. What's the antidote? It's in verses 31-32: *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

So connect the dots. If we abide in His Word, we will know the truth, then the truth will set us free. There are two things that come when we faithfully live out the Scriptures. First of all, you need to know the Scriptures, then second, you need to keep the Scriptures. Know the Word; keep the Word.

Know the Scriptures

First, let's talk about knowing the Word. There is a truth to be known. There is a truth to be grasped. There is a truth to be collected and held on to. This truth is the truth of God's Word. We need to know the Word, the living and active Word of God. Why do we need to know it? Because the devil is out telling lies. Let's work through some of these things.

Young lady, you're out there right now and the devil is whispering in your ear, "You're ugly. You mean nothing. Nobody cares about you. You're not going to make anything of yourself, all because of what you see in the mirror. Your body is screaming, 'I'm terrible. I'm worthless. I'm nothing.'" So you've bought into this lie, but if you would just know the Word, you would be set free. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. You're a daughter of the most-high God. You are the apple of His eye. He has great and marvelous plans for you. He says to you, "Even if you don't think you're pretty, listen to this. Beauty is fleeting, but the character of a young woman is worth more than rubies or gold."

Do you see what happens, my friends, when we take the truth of God's Word and apply it to our lives? All we're doing is what Jesus did when the temptations and lies of the devil come. He replied with, "It is written, it is written, it is written..."

Let me speak to the men now. You might be thinking, "My body is telling me I need to lust. My body is telling me I need to release." But the Bible tells us, "Men, don't throw fire into your lap; you will get burned. Don't fall to the cravings of your sinful nature. Put those things off and put on Christ. Stop going to those places; you don't need to be there. That's not where you're going to find your fulfillment." A man of God who is pleasing to God is a man who follows every dictate and precept of God's Word. Do you see what happens? If you start applying God's truth over the lies, you won't fall into sin.

How about financially? It's all about making money, the world says. So accumulate, accumulate, accumulate. When something gets out of place in our world, we have to fix it up. We have to renovate. I'm not saying those things are inherently bad, but if we're driven by those things, then money becomes our god. What does Scripture say? *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy...But seek first the kingdom of God"* (Matthew 6:19, 33). Apply the promises of Scripture to your finances. You can't do anything about the lies until you know the Word. If you don't know the Word, if you cannot off-the-cuff come up with answers to the devil's lies, you will not find freedom. How does a young man keep his way pure? By meditating on the law of the Lord day and night (Joshua 1:8).

Keep the Scriptures

Know the Word and second, keep the Word. That means do it. What good is it to know the Word, but then run away from it? We've got to keep the Word. I love what Jesus says in verse 51: *'I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.'* What's He talking about?

You won't understand what Jesus is saying unless you connect what He's saying to what He said about the devil. "You will never see death." Well, why might you see death? Because we're told that the devil is a murderer from the beginning. If you want to keep the devil's murderous hands off of your life, if you want to keep his murderous touch from the things you hold dear, then keep the Word of God. Obey the Word of God and the devil won't be able to touch you. That's why the Bible says, "If we stand firm when it comes to the devil, he has to what? Flee from us" (James 4:7).

Church, we have an opportunity to experience freedom. We have to position ourselves to be with our Lord. We need to follow Him. We need to fight against the devil's schemes. We need to faithfully live out the Scriptures. Know the Word and keep the Word. When we do, my friends, we will be free indeed. Whom the Son has set free, will be free (John 8:36). I want you to be free. Even more than that, God wants you to be free. Will you give your life to Him, so you can experience that freedom now and forevermore?