

**Introduction:**

- How Freedom Christian Center got its name. In 1986, Kelly and I received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in other tongues. We entered a new place in God! FREEDOM!!! Freedom is very noticeable when you have been bound by tradition, bad theology, and limitations while serving a limitless God. You Suddenly realize... you were a prisoner. The Bible is all about Freedom! *"For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."* (2 Corinthians 3:17, NLT) John 8:36 *"Whom the Son sets free is free indeed!"*
- I have been all around the world and people from every nation are looking for freedom and they are looking for life. Every nation! No matter the culture, the customs, people are looking for life and they are looking for Freedom. This is the reason Freedom Christian Center exist... **"To bring freedom and life to people and glory to God."** It is found only in one place. The Kingdom of God's dear Son
- *"Jesus said to those Jews who believed in him, "When you continue to embrace all that I teach, you prove that you are my true followers. **For if you embrace the truth, it will release more freedom into your lives.**" Surprised by this, they said, "But we're the descendants of Abraham and we're already free. We've never been in bondage to anyone. How could you say that we will be released into more freedom?" "I speak eternal truth," Jesus said. "When you sin you are not free. You've become a slave in bondage to your sin. And slaves have no permanent standing in a family, like a son does, for a son is a part of the family forever. **So if the Son sets you free from sin, then become a true son and be unquestionably free!**" (John 8:31-36, TPT)*
- So the question today is, Whose Prisoner Are You? Know that Jesus came to set captives free!

**I. Everyone Is A Prisoner of Something**

## A. 2015 Zombies Dream.

1. First dream: In my dream, I am with a small group of people and zombies appear. They start coming toward us. When I saw the zombies, we started to kill them. I did not feel right in spirit about doing this. When I stopped shooting them, I started pushing them away and discovered they really were not dangerous. Annoying, yes...dangerous, no. In fact, I found they could not hurt me. Then I woke up.
2. Went back to sleep and entered a second dream: Again, the zombies were coming toward us. As the group with me began to prepare to shoot zombies, I yelled out, "Don't shoot! These are people." Then I woke up.
3. I believe that God speaks to us in our dreams. So I ask, "What is God trying to say something to me?"
  - a) Zombies represent a partial/sort of resurrection of the dead that exists to create fear. People who live under demonic influence create fear in other people's lives. Christian or non-Christian.
  - b) Zombies are the walking dead, they can be believers who live under the influence of the prince of the power of the air rather than under the power of the Spirit in the atmosphere of heaven. Show me a zombie in life and I will show you a person who is a prisoner of something other than Christ.

- c) Zombies are a picture of marred humanity that is in need of restoration. IE. If I had a zombie on the platform this morning, this morning you would see him. But what you would not see is that there is a real person underneath all the make up. As the make up came off you would see the person. There are too many believers in the body of Christ like that today.
- 4. What these captives need is Freedom.
  - a) *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come."* (Luke 4:18-19, NLT)
  - b) *"So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free."* (John 8:36, NLT)
- B. Everyone is a prisoner of something. Whose prisoner are you?
  - 1. Prisoner of fear. Did you know that there are well over 100 different medical names of different fears. One list I looked at had 60 fears that started with the letter 'A'. Many fears of christians are fear of not having enough. (prison of poverty) Fear of not being accepted. (prison of rejection) fear of pain. (prison of torment/being hurt), fear of failure (prison of performance),
    - a) *"Love never brings fear, for **fear is always related to punishment**. But love's perfection drives the fear of punishment far from our hearts. Whoever walks constantly afraid of punishment has not reached love's perfection."* (1 John 4:18, TPT)
      - (1) Fear is always related to punishment
      - (2) And punishment is always related to pain.
    - b) Jesus came to deliver us from our fears. That brings you into abundant living.
  - 2. Prisoner of past failures
  - 3. Prisoner of pain
  - 4. Prisoner of patterns
  - 5. Prisoner of lusts
- C. Whose prisoner are you? Everyone is a prisoner of something. But we all want to be prisoners of Jesus Christ! This happens through a commitment to Christ and a process of growth and transformation/maturity.
  - 1. The goal is to be a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ! This was Paul's testimony. Eph 3:1; 4:1; 2 Tim 1:8; Philemon 1, 8. *I Paul a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ*. A prisoner has no rights. (Lord, your will be done; that you may know the will of God) A prisoner is subject to another. If that is the case then I want to be a prisoner of Christ!
  - 2. We must recognize what we are prisoners of and take responsibility to get free.
  - 3. \*\*IE. Last year at this time you wrote on a piece of paper what you wanted to be free of. How many have a testimony of walking out of that fear last year?

## II. Free Men Do Not Wear Prison Clothes

- A. You are alive so be dressed for the occasion! Paul starts chapter four of Ephesians with these words, *"Therefore I, Paul, a prisoner for serving the Lord, **beg you to lead a life worthy of your***

*calling, for you have been called by God.*" (Ephesians 4:1, NLT) Paul is saying get dressed for the occasion! You are alive!

1. Be, in practice, what the calling of God has made you. Live worthy of the calling in Christ.
    - a) Jesus called us to himself. IE. Like Lazarus we have been called out of the prison of death!!
    - b) We accepted His invitation to live! Therefore, live worthy of His sacrifice! How do we do that? We take off the prison clothes and put on Christ.
  2. ***"throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception."*** (Ephesians 4:22, NLT) Paul is telling the Ephesians to strip off the prison clothes.
  3. ***"...for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him."*** (Colossians 3:9-10, NLT) Paul is telling the Colossians to put on the new because they have taken off the old.
- B. Put on! Get dressed!
1. Co-operate with the Holy Spirit. IE. Remember an earlier sermon on being directed by the Holy Spirit? Skateboard.
  2. Removal begins with right thinking. Change the way you think! ***"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."*** (Romans 12:2, NLT)
    - a) The word renewing is from the Greek word 'anakoinosis,' which when translated into English, means to renovate. IE. If you renovate a house, you have to demolish the parts you no longer want. You tear it out, often with some effort. This is similar to renovating your mind. We must tear out and demolish the old parts of our sin filled minds and memories. Bring in the new.
    - b) Col 3. Think about things above.
    - c) Phil 4:8 Think about what is excellent...
    - d) What are you thinking about? How often do you think about it? Brother Lawrence—Practicing the Presence.
    - e) 2 Cor 10:5 take every thought captive. In other words your outlook determines your outcome.
  3. Be pro-active in getting dressed. ***"Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy."*** (Ephesians 4:24, NLT) New nature is righteous. What fellowship have light and darkness. ***"Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?"*** (2 Corinthians 6:14, NLT)
    - a) Don't partner with what will get you dirty. Ie. Yoke donkey and ox. Donkey is unclean.
    - b) Make right partnerships. Partner with those who will get deeper into the Kingdom of God.

4. Kill it! *"So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world."* (Colossians 3:5, NLT)
- a) **nekróō**. This means "to put to death" and is used medically for atrophy. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). NICNT Moos (p. 627). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
- b) What are we putting to death? That member of the parts of the body that continue to sin. Neither Paul nor Jesus in Mt 5 are suggesting mutilation of your body. They are saying that sinful member must 'atrophy.' Be rendered powerless to sin.
- (1) *"So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires."* (Romans 6:11-12, NLT) Consider means to calculate, reason, think about.
- (2) *"Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy."* (Romans 6:19, NLT)
- (3) *"And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom."* (Romans 6:21, NLT)
- C. What you are dressed in matters to God. God does not want us in prison clothes! He wants all the 'zombie' garb to come off so that we look like true members of the Household of God. That is why Jesus, Paul and the Gospel writers stress:
1. Put off the old man, throw off the sin which entangles
  2. Put on the new man, put on righteousness,
  3. Prison/Grave clothes are not allowed!!!
- a) *"Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace?"* Of course not. (Romans 6:1, NLT)
- b) *"Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not!"* (Romans 6:15, NLT)
4. Luke 15, when the prodigal came home he had to leave the pig pens (prisons) behind. To not do this means; 1. you don't know you have them on or 2. you do not care.
- D. Church, I want you to care! Let's bring our lives into alignment with the Word.
1. Yes, we have a positional righteousness in Christ Jesus, by faith.
  2. But there must be a practical righteousness as a result of that position.
  3. Take territory! Bring each member into submission to Christ Jesus.
  4. **"Carefully determine what pleases the Lord."** (Ephesians 5:10, NLT)
  5. **"So be careful how you live..."** (Ephesians 5:15, NLT)
  6. **"be filled with the Holy Spirit,"** (Ephesians 5:18, NLT)

### Conclusion:

- John 8:32 *"And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."*

- “In October 1864, word came to President Abraham Lincoln of a Mrs. Bixby, a Boston widow whose five sons had all been killed fighting in the Civil War. Lincoln later wrote his condolences: ‘Dear Madam, I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that your heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom. Yours very sincerely and respectfully, Abraham Lincoln.’ How beautiful the story would be if it ended here with the simple, literary elegance that was Lincoln’s alone. But the story took an ironic turn just a few weeks after the letter was sent. No sooner had Mrs. Bixby received her letter when it was leaked to the press by someone in the White House. It was proclaimed a masterpiece for some weeks until a reporter went to the records of the Adjutant General and discovered that the president had been given bad information. Mrs. Bixby had not lost all five of her sons in battle. One was killed in action at Fredericksburg. One was killed in action at Petersburg. One was taken prisoner at Gettysburg and later exchanged and returned to his mother in good health. One deserted to the enemy. One deserted his post and fled the country. **APPLICATION:** Lincoln’s words to Mrs. Bixby were so moving, so powerful. However, they are somewhat diminished by the truth. Take away the profundity of the sacrifice and the words lose their power. The greatest sacrifice ever made was that of our Heavenly Father--Who gave the world His only begotten Son. No one has ever laid a more costly sacrifice upon the altar of freedom. It is the profound nature of this sacrifice that gives the Gospel message its life transforming power. FREEDOM!