

Sept 13/21 – Small Group - John 8:31-36; 51-59 “His Service is Perfect Freedom”

Read John 8:31-36; 51-59

1. (31) Jesus turns to those who already believe in him to say that if they abide in his word they will know the truth and the truth will set them free. What would it look like practically to have his word abide, dwell, live in us?
2. (34-35) His listeners are angry and offended by his offer of freedom, for to offer someone freedom is to imply that they are enslaved to someone or something. What is the nature of their slavery that Jesus wants them to see? Is this a slavery we can relate to? if so, how?
3. How does the modern western person envision freedom? Does what Jesus offers sound like freedom?

We often envision freedom as the absence of any constraints on our personal choices. To pursue such a freedom however is pure fantasy as we will never achieve such freedom, for something will always constrain us. To flourish in relationships we must to varying degrees and in varying ways constrain our personal freedom for the sake of the relationship. When we make choices we are often constraining our freedom in one area to experience greater freedom in another. So the question must be which constraints are in our best interest, which constraints will undergird our flourishing?

4. Jesus says that if we accept the constraints of his word we will be free, we will have life. The constraints of his word are the constraints of love for he summarizes his word as loving God and loving others (Mark 12:28-31). How will being constrained by love undergird our full flourishing as human beings?
5. The first listeners are deeply offended by his suggestion that his word is perfectly suited for our flourishing as humanity and rightly ask ‘who do you think you are’? What are their suggestions? What is his answer?
6. It was John Stott who said that those who truly met Jesus either ran in terror, assaulted with fury, or prostrated themselves in utter surrender. How will we respond to Jesus, the I AM? And what would that look like in light of this teaching?