

Battle of the Mind 3

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes the importance of breaking down mental strongholds through the truth of God's Word to achieve true freedom in Christ.

Duration: 49:02

Scripture: John 8:31

Topics: "Mind"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of abiding in the word of God and being disciples. They highlight that the truth of the word is the only thing that can truly set us free, while everything else is false. The speaker also discusses the influence of our environment and the people we spend time with, emphasizing the need to surround ourselves with Christian friends who encourage and build us up. They caution against allowing the world to shape our thinking and urge listeners to spend more time in the word, in prayer, and with Christian friends.

Transcript

Let's turn to the book of Corinthians, 2 Corinthians. I'm going to take two readings this morning, first from 2 Corinthians 10 and the second from John chapter 8. We're dealing with the issue or the question of strongholds from 2 Corinthians 10, but I want to explain some aspect of the breaking down of those strongholds from the passage in John 8. So the first reading is 2 Corinthians 10 from verse 1 through 6. 2 Corinthians 10 verses 1 through 6. And then the second reading will be from John chapter 8. 2 Corinthians 10 verse 1. Now I, Paul, myself, am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent, am bold toward you. But I beg you that when I am present, I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. Now, what he is saying here is, and we've been speaking about the fact that we have these strongholds which are built in our minds, and they are made up of arguments, reasons, and they are built up over a long period of time.

They are built up from when we are children, and they form our thinking. They form the basis from which we react and respond. They form our opinion of ourselves and of our world around us.

And he says that our weapons are powerful in order to bring these strongholds down, to break them down. And so you'll see verse 4. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds. Now, to bring these strongholds down, they don't come down with one big explosion, but they have to be broken down the same way as they are built up.

They have to be broken down one stone at a time. And so, one stone by one, stone after stone, we have to bring these strongholds down until they are nothing. Now, last week we spoke about the fact that, unfortunately, as we break these strongholds down through the teaching of the Word, maybe on a Sunday, at the same time, the world, the flesh and the devil are constantly trying to rebuild those strongholds.

And they are being rebuilt through the things that we primarily see and hear, through the media, through the television, through magazines, through newspapers, through books, through the radio, through all sorts of things that the world is using to be able to reinforce those strongholds in our lives. And the problem is that we can try and break down a couple of rocks or stones that make up these fortresses during a Sunday, but if we are allowing the world to rebuild those that are built down, and even to build a few more during the week, well, we are not going to go anywhere fast. And so we need to stop these things from being built up while we try and break them down.

The point is that, unfortunately, in many of our lives, we find ourselves maybe reading the Scriptures a few minutes a day, being in the service for an hour a week, but at the same time, we are in the world 24-7, and the world is bombarding us with a different view and constantly rebuilding those strongholds that are being broken down. Now, today I want to speak about how we can break these strongholds down, but you will see in verse 5, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. These strongholds are made up of arguments.

There are reasons why we see things the way we see things. We have reasons why we feel about ourselves and about others the way we feel about them. They are made up of arguments, and they are reinforced over years and years and years of one argument upon the other, one argument upon the other, the same way as a stronghold is built up.

Now, the only thing that can break down an argument, we can use machines to break down fortresses, we can use cables and ropes and chains to pull down those rocks one at a time, but when it comes to these strongholds in our minds, well, there is only one thing that will break them down, and that is stronger arguments, stronger reasons. So, the world says, you need to be this way, and gives us the reasons why we need to be that particular way. The only way those things can be destroyed is when we bring a stronger argument against them, and that argument has to come from the word of God.

And as we break that down, one argument after the other, step by step, line upon line, the scripture says in the Old Testament, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, as we allow the word of God to bring these thoughts under control, our thinking will change, and the power and the hold that these strongholds have upon our lives will be broken. Now, let's go to the book of John, chapter 8, and here we have a lot of detail as to how this can happen. John, chapter 8, and verse 31 through 36.

Now, again, this is a passage which is often misquoted by Christians and by the world. You know, when the world begins to quote scripture, you must know that our thinking on that scripture is perverted, is twisted. And you'll hear all sorts of people, social engineers, politicians, philosophers, quoting from this passage, the truth will set you free.

You ever heard an unbeliever quote that verse? Yeah? And so our thinking, the way that we see this verse, is twisted by the fact that the world just quotes this verse and quotes it out of context. Remember, this is a thing you'll hear me say often, it has to be quoted in its context, and we're going to study the context of this saying today, so that we can understand what it really means. So, John, chapter 8, verse 31.

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed him, If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say you will be made free? Jesus answered them, Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

And a slave does not abide in a house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore, if the son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. Now, what is the connection between this passage and the passage in Corinthians? Well, in Corinthians it speaks about strongholds, this speaks about slaves.

But they do the same thing. A stronghold controls territory, controls an area. And so, if you have a stronghold on a hill, it will command that area.

It will have power and authority over that area, and subjugate and control that immediate area. That's exactly what slavery does. And so, a slave master will control, will subjugate, will manage, will bring under his dominion his slaves.

And so, the strongholds in our minds control us. They enslave us. And so, the ideas are exactly the same.

And here he speaks about how can we come free of that slavery. And of course, the argument that the Jews had is that, we're not enslaved, we're Jews, we're free. The same way as we would say, well, we're Americans or you're Americans.

The land of the free. We're free. We're not in bondage to anyone.

As we showed a few, probably months ago now, that many of us say we're free when we're enslaved to debt. And so, we're not really free. But in fact, Jesus is saying here, you can say I'm American or I'm Jewish, and therefore, I'm free.

I'm not in bondage to anyone. He says, well, if you're a servant of sin, verse 34, most assuredly, I said, you whoever commits sin, is a slave of sin. And that's where our slavery lies.

We may be free politically, but we may be enslaved emotionally and spiritually. Doing things, Paul said, that we should not be doing. And not doing the things that we should be doing.

That's just the problem. So, we find that we have this thing that controls us, and it's called sin. And so, why do we react in the wrong way, when we should, in fact, be reacting in a good way? Why do we react negatively to things that people say and do to us? Why do we not react the way we should be? Because we're enslaved to sin.

Why is it that the world is able just to pop a little idea, or the devil is able to just pop a little idea into our minds? And that sends us off on a whole chain of reactions, which causes us to feel and to act and to react in an ungodly way. Because we are enslaved to these things. People are enslaved to some of the things that we have mentioned, to their habits, to ways of thinking.

People are enslaved to their complexes, whether they be inferiority complexes or superiority complexes. People are enslaved to the way that they were brought up. And we become controlled by these things.

And what Jesus is saying is that we can be set free from these things. We can be delivered. We don't have to feel that this is the way I'm going to be for the rest of my life.

Unfortunately, many Christians have given up. And they say, well, you know, I was born this way, or this is the way I grew up, and this is the way my parents raised me, and unfortunately, this is what the world has done to me. And so, I have this perverted view of things.

I have this ungodly way of reacting or responding or valuing things. And it's never going to change. But the good news is it can change.

Every one of us can change. And the message and the power of the gospel lies in its ability to change us. You know, I'm so sad when I come across Christians who seem to feel that, you know, nothing is ever going to change for me.

I will always be a loser. I will always be depressed. I will always be beaten.

I will always have a temper. I will always have lust. I will always have whatever it is.

I will always feel others are always better than I am. Or I will always struggle with pride and arrogance. And so the list goes on and on and on.

We don't have to be beaten. We don't have to be enslaved by these things. We don't have to be controlled by the world and its system.

We can be set free. And Jesus gives us part of the recipe here. He gives us part of the formula.

And he says that the truth will make you free. The truth will make you free. Now, how does this work? Well, let's understand the context.

Because when he speaks about the truth, he's not speaking about a political truth. He's not speaking about a social truth. He's not speaking about a philosophical truth.

He's speaking about a doctrinal truth. A biblical truth. Verse 31.

Jesus said to those Jews who believed in him, If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth. You see, that phrase, you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free, does not stand on its own. It begins with the word, and.

In other words, it is connected to what he has just said. And what he has just said is, first of all, if you abide in my word. So, this formula, and I hate that word, but I don't know how else to describe it, this recipe to becoming free of the slavery, is not a recipe that has to do with any truth.

And it does not stand on its own. It is against the background of, first of all, abiding in his word. If you abide in my word, you are my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

You see, there's a whole series of things here. This is not an easy, one-step formula. There is abiding in the word, there is being disciples, there is knowing the truth, and then the result, number four only, is the truth will set you free.

You can't take a shortcut and go from zero to number four. You have to go through this process. You have to begin by abiding in the word.

Now, for people who quote this verse and do not abide in the word, it's a meaningless saying. The truth about the politicians who are running for election right now, is not going to set anybody free. It does not have any magical ability.

There is only one truth that is able to set us free, and that is the truth of the word of God. Everything else is false. Everything else has a measure of untruth in it.

And the strongholds in our minds and the slavery that we find within our minds is built up of half-truths and lies and deceptions. Take depression as an example. And I'm not suggesting that there are easy ways out of these things.

I understand that depression is a very, very hard thing to break, particularly people who are in deep depression. And I understand that many times there are medical reasons why people have those problems, and they need to receive some medication, and they need to receive good counsel. In fact, it's very interesting.

I just read an article this last week where there's been a survey of many thousands of respondents, and they discovered that medication on its own does not give a solution to depression, but that when medication together with counseling is applied, people can get deliverance, can be set free from the oppression of depression. And so, what does counseling do? It brings the truth. And it's particularly when it's the truth of the word of God that someone can be set free.

And so, how does this work in practice? In practice, I say, well, you know, the sky is going to fall on my head. You ever see those comics of Asterix? The sky is going to fall on my head. There's this terrible thing that's going to happen.

But what is the truth? The truth is that God is in control, that he is not going to allow anything to happen to us that we are not able to cope with, but he will with the trial, with the difficulty, bring a way of escape. The truth is that he's going to be there with me when we go through the times of difficulty. And so, you can see that the truth of God's word negates, and not only negates, but brings down the lie of the devil.

The sky is going to fall on my head. Tomorrow, something terrible is going to happen to me. No, all things work together for the good to them that love God and are called according to his purpose.

God doesn't love me anymore. Nobody loves me. Jesus says, he loves them to the very end.

Jesus says, I will never leave you nor forsake you. And so, the truth of God's word is greater than the lies and the deceptions of our experiences, and of the devil, and of the world. And you know, the problem with our experiences is that they are always just our perception.

You know, it's amazing how many times we experience something and we say, you know, that's the way this thing is. It's this way, it's black. And yet, when you speak to other people who've been part of the same experience, you discover, in fact, it's not black.

It may be white, or it may be grey, or pink, or red, or some other color. But because I experienced it in a particular way, I'm absolutely convinced that that's the way it is. And yet, that is not the way it is.

And so, we need the truth to set us free from the way that we have perceived these things. And that begins by abiding in the word. Now, the word abiding means to remain in.

You are not abiding in the word if you listen to my sermon once a week for 40 minutes, and that's that. It's going to do nothing for you. In fact, this is one of the frustrations of being a preacher, is that people sit in the audience and they want some magic formula which is going to change their whole lives in 40 minutes a week.

I cannot change your life, and the power of God's word, as much as powerful as it is, will not set you free if you're only receiving the word for 40 minutes a week. But it will change your life when you abide in it. The word abide means to live in it.

When you begin to live in the word of God. And when the word of God begins to be that filter through which everything you see, and everything you hear, and everything you read, and everything that comes to you, when that comes through the filter of the word of God, and all of the lies, and the deception, and the cheating, and all of that begins to be filtered out, and only the truth begins to come through, it will begin to change our lives. It's when everything that the devil, and that the world, and that the flesh, these are the three things that are attacking us all the time.

When everything which I hear is evaluated against the word of God. But what does God say about that? You see, because the arguments that the world, and the flesh, and the devil present are very good. You are no good.

Your parents have told you that, your teachers have told you that, your friends, your neighbors, everybody has told you that, your boss, your colleagues have told you that, you've heard that many, many times, you come to the conclusion, I'm no good. But what is the truth? What is the truth? It doesn't matter how many... You see, this is one of the tricks of deception, this is one of the tricks of the world, and of the devil, is by just saying the same thing over, and over, and over, eventually it becomes the truth. And you just need to... I just think that politicians just illustrate these things very well.

When you listen to politicians, you hear them say the same thing over, and over, and over, and over, it doesn't matter whether it's the truth or not the truth, but if they say it enough times, eventually everybody believes that this is the way it is. This is the truth. But it's not.

And so, it doesn't matter how many times you've heard a particular thing in your mind, and in your head, and how powerful that thing has become in your life, the question is, what does the Word of God say? The Word of God says that He loved you, personally, died for you. That He values you. You say, I'm no good, I'm worth nothing.

Well, Jesus says, I will give you a price, I'll tell you what you're worth. And the worth that He has attached to every one of our lives is this, what has a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul? This whole world, the cosmos, with all of its power, and its riches, and its glory, and whatever it has to

offer, cannot be compared to the value of your soul. It says that we were not redeemed with corruptible things of silver and gold.

In plain English, the whole world did not have the money to buy your soul back. It had to be bought with one thing only, and that is with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. That is the value that God has attached to your life.

And folks, we need to believe what God says, and not what our experience tells us. It doesn't matter how many times our experience has repeated the same thing over and over, you have to believe what God says. But it can only begin to set me free as I live, and abide, and remain in the Word.

The moment I go outside of the Word, I am exposed, and you have no chance. Because the lies are coming at you from a thousand sides. And as I've said before, five thousand times a day, five thousand messages that bombard our minds every single day.

And 99.9% of those messages are wrong messages. They're inculcating and establishing in our lives wrong values. You're only good if you look like a movie star.

When you have perfect teeth, perfect figure, perfect hair, perfect everything. That's the only time you're worth anything. That's the message the world is preaching out there right now.

And every one of our young people grow up with perverted views as to who they are, because I don't look like Claudia Schiffer or whoever. Mel Gibson. Folks, that's a lie.

You're only worth something if you drive such and such motor car. If you have such and such a career. If you have so much of so much money.

Your value is established by these things. And folks, this is not something that affects the world. The world is sold down that road anyway.

But this affects Christians. And there is not one of us here this morning whose self-worth, whose value, whose relationship with God and his relationship with others has not been forced or been twisted or tainted or perverted by those values that we see out there in the magazines, on the television, on the billboards, in the world all the time. And so we need the truth of God's word.

What does God's word have to say about your looks? Nothing. Not a single scripture that says, if you look like this, God thinks you're wonderful. Not a single scripture.

Because God is not interested in what you look like. Whether you have three eyes and four hands. Whether you're long or short or light or dark.

God is not interested. It makes absolutely no difference. Because God does not look on the outside, but he looks on the inside.

And in fact, the verses that deal with the outside deal with exactly that subject. Remember Samuel, the prophet came to anoint a king over Israel and he looked at these young guys and he said, here's a man, he's handsome, he looks intelligent, he's got a straight eye, he's strong, I think this is the man. And eventually he comes to the youngest and the weakest and the most despised of the whole lot.

And God says, that's the man I want. God is not interested in the things that the world is interested in. And yet our perceptions, our values, the way that we think and the way that we feel is established by the world all the time.

And the only way we will ever get victory is when we begin to live and to abide and to live in the word. In fact, there is no shortcut to it. And I'm incredibly frustrated by books and magazines and preachers who are constantly sowing this message that you can be different by just following this easy formula.

In fact, there is no easy formula. The formula to success and to victory in this area is abiding in the word. If you abide in the word, he says, you are my disciples indeed.

And there is a difference between a disciple and a Christian. The world is full of Christians, very, very few disciples. A disciple is not just somebody who has learnt or is learning some things.

A disciple is a follower, is someone who follows. In the old days, the rabbis, Jesus had 12 disciples. Those disciples did not just listen to Jesus teach once a week or three times a week.

Those disciples lived with him 24 hours a day, seven days a week for three and a half years. And in fact, Kittel, which is a very authoritative book, which is the most respected dictionary on New Testament words, says that an intellectual process that always, it's an intellectual process that always has external effects. Being a disciple has to do with the mind, but it has external effects.

The word disciple is not just learning things in the mind, but it has a result in the way I live. And so true disciples are people who follow Jesus. He says, if you want to be my disciple, you need to take up your cross daily and follow me.

And so the world is full of people who give intellectual agreement, who in their minds say, yeah, the Bible is true. Jesus died on the cross. Jesus rose from the dead.

But their lives are unchanged. A true disciple is someone who believes and acts upon the word, who loves the word, not just believes the word in their minds. And so he says, if you abide in my word, remain in the word of God, and you are my disciples indeed, then he says, and you shall know the truth.

How will I know the truth? By abiding in the word and following Jesus. That's the only way you're going to know the truth. You will not know the truth by just following Jesus, because he has chosen through his word to reveal the truth.

You will not know the truth by just reading the Bible. You see, because truth is not just something I know, but it is something I believe and act upon. And so as I abide in the word, as I am a disciple, I will then know the truth.

In fact, we need to know the truth, because as I've said over and over this morning, we are constantly being fed the lies of the world. And he says, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. What truth? The truth of God's word, God's perspective on things.

And if there is an area that you are struggling with this morning, that is controlling your life, that is controlling your thinking, your values, the way you react and you respond, there is one solution to that, and that is the truth. What does God have to say about it? What does God have to say about your thoughts of greed, or of revenge, or of bitterness, or of unforgiveness, or of lust, or of inferiority, or of pride? What

does God have to say about that? And you know what, that God's word addresses every one of those issues. Not just in saying, it is wrong to think lustful thoughts, but provides the solutions how to deal with those thoughts.

The problem is, as we've said this morning, the solutions are not just in a little pamphlet I can give you, and you just go away, and that's going to... The solutions lie in exactly what we've been saying this morning, in abiding in the word, abiding in the truth. And then he says, you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. But now I want you to go down to verse 36.

And there he says, if the sun makes you free, you shall be free indeed. But he just said that the truth will set you free. Now he's saying, the sun will set you free.

So is this a contradiction? No, it's the same thing. Jesus is the truth. John chapter 14, Jesus says, I am the way, I am the truth.

I am the truth, and I am the life. And so, what truth is it that I need to know that is going to set me free? Well, it's the truth about all of the facts that we've spoken about, the truth about pride, the truth about these things. But it is specifically as I get to know Jesus, that I will be set free.

In fact, there are many, many people who know the Bible, but who are still bound by their sin, and by their habits, and by their strongholds that control their lives. Why? Because they've learned the Bible, but they've not learned Jesus. There's a difference between the two.

And so, do we know Jesus? In fact, again, this needs to be more than just an external thing that I screw on or bolt on to the outside of me. And I don't see those that much anymore, but at one time it was very popular all over the world to wear these little WWJD bangles. What would Jesus do? And there's some truth in that, but there's also some deception in it.

And the deception lies in this, that we begin to have this external set of values where we say, well, you know, now what would Jesus do in this situation? I don't believe that that's what he's talking about here. Because by the time I've said, well, what would Jesus do in this situation, I've already reacted incorrectly. I need to be changed in who I am.

And I need to instinctively begin to react and to respond and to do and to initiate the way Jesus did, without having to look at the bangle and say, well, now, what would Jesus do? The essence of who I am needs to be changed. How can I be changed in that way, so that even without thinking, I will do the right thing? Because that's what we want. That's what all of us are after, that we don't have to have the struggle of first of all saying, you know, shall I, shall I, maybe, maybe not, may, you know, go through this whole thing, what would Jesus do, what does the Bible say about it? No, that I will instinctively do the right thing.

Is that possible? Yes, I believe it's possible. I believe that we can be changed, that our values and the core of who we are, our very being, our very essence, will automatically do the right thing. That's the power of the gospel.

But it can only come as I abide in the truth, as I'm a true disciple, and as I get to know the truth, as I get to know Jesus. You see, because as I get to know Jesus, I cannot get to know him without him changing my life. You become like the people you spend time with.

Ever heard the saying, evil communications corrupt good manners? It's in the Bible. Your friends will shape who you are. The things you spend your time with, the people you spend time with, will shape who you are.

You're a product of your environment. We don't need the Bible to tell us that, we know that. To such a degree that some people begin to look like their dogs.

Ever seen people walk their dogs and see how much they look like their dog? Well, we become like the things that we spend our time with. And if you spend your time with material things, you're going to become materialistic. And if you spend your time with bad friends, as our young people struggle with gangs and those sorts of things, those will build in your life bad habits.

Many of the young people here can testify to that. But as we spend our time in the word of God, and as we spend our time with Jesus, we will become like him. And Paul writes in the book of Corinthians, and he says that as we look into the glass or into the mirror of the word of God, we are changed into that same image from glory to glory.

This is just one of the natural things which God powerfully uses, is as we spend time with Jesus, we become like him. You can't help it. It's not something you have to try and work on and say, well, let me try and be like Jesus.

Just spend time with him. Just spend time in his word, and it's going to change you. It has to.

But spend time in the world, spend time being bombarded and being flooded with the things of the world, it's going to shape you into its image. You're going to become like whatever it is you allow to control your life. Now, folks, that's easy, that's wonderful.

But it's hard to do, because the world is so attractive. It's so nice to look at the things and to listen to what the world has to say. It takes a little bit of discipline, it takes a little bit of staying awake to listen to a boring preacher, and to read the word of God.

But, folks, there is no shortcut. Spend time in the word. How much time do you spend in the word? How much time do you spend in prayer? How much time do you spend with Christian friends? And you just go home, and you just do that little sum, and say, how much time a day am I spending in the word, in prayer, and with Christian friends? Now, when you speak about spending time with Christian friends, I'm not talking about spending time with Christian friends and gossiping about other Christians.

I'm talking about speaking about the things of God, the things that are able to encourage and build us up. And then, how much time do I spend allowing the world to shape my thinking? Through the television, through the magazines, through the newspaper, through all of these various things. And that will, you just do the sums, you just do the math, and you'll figure out that percentage is going to be a direct proportion to the percentage to which you become like Jesus or like the world.

It's just a natural law. What you sow is what you reap. There's no way you can spend 90% of your time being bombarded by the world and become 100% like Jesus.

It will never happen. Now, I understand that we have jobs, and that we have to be involved in the things of the world. I understand that.

But you know what? I can still be abiding in the word. I can still have this filter. Remember, I spoke about that filter.

I can still have the filter, and so whatever the world tells me, I will constantly be measuring it against the word. But is that true? You will get a wonderful husband if you have liposuction and augmentation and plastic surgery. Is that true? Is that what the word says? Just think about every advert or advertisement that you see in the world, and look at that advert and look at it against the word of God and say, is that the truth? What is the truth about this advert for whatever it is? A motor car? Food? Entertainment? Whatever.

Abide in the word. Be my disciples. Know the truth.

Know Jesus. And the truth will set you free. Let me close with a couple of verses from Matthew chapter 11.

Jesus says, Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. But we need rest from the struggles in our hearts and in our minds and in our emotions. Jesus says, Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly and hot, and you will find rest for your souls.

My yoke is easy, my burden is light. Jesus is speaking about the way that you would take a wild ox and you would span it in to the same yoke with a tame ox. And the tame one will pacify the wild one.

And Jesus says, Learn from me. Come into the yoke with me. Spend time with me.

And I will give you rest. Let's pray. Father, as we talk about these things, we know that there are real issues in every one of our hearts, Lord, and we struggle with these things.

And Lord, we recognize also that one of the problems is that we are so influenced by the world in so many ways. The world is so powerful, it is so persuasive, it is so persistent in its messages. Lord, that we believe whatever the world has to say, even though it may be subconsciously.

We pray, Lord, that we may be people of the word, people who are able to evaluate what the world has to say against your word. Lord, that we may know the truth, and that we may not be fooled into accepting a lie or deception for the truth, but that we may know the truth, that we may know Jesus, and that he may set us free. Lord, there is not one of us in the service this morning who does not want to be free from the things that bind us.

Help us, Lord, to look to you, to go your way, that we might be delivered and that we might be set free. That those strongholds in our minds that have controlled us and dominated us for such a long time, that they may be broken down, and that they may be brought under control. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Go with us, Lord, as we go our different ways. Bring us together again this evening, that we may once again spend time with one another and in your presence. But Lord, even as we go into the rest of this day, and as we again go outside of this building, we pray, Lord, that our hearts and minds may be guarded and protected against the lies and the deception, and that we may know the truth.

In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

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