

This Way to Real Freedom

by Warren Wiersbe

Warren Wiersbe's sermon explores the profound connection between knowing the truth of Jesus Christ and experiencing true spiritual freedom.

Duration: 35:10

Scripture: John 8:31-35, John 8:37, John 8:44, John 8:48, John 8:59

Topics: "Spiritual Freedom", "Gods Truth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of embracing God's truth and not being afraid of it. He explains that when our minds are filled with God's truth, our hearts are in love with it, and our wills are aligned with it, we become true disciples of Jesus. The preacher warns against being controlled by lies and encourages listeners to regularly evaluate their beliefs and behaviors in light of God's truth. He emphasizes that the truth of God sets us free from the lies of Satan and leads to a transformed mind, heart, and will.

Transcript

Reading the Word of God from the Gospel of John, Chapter 8, beginning at verse 30 and concluding at verse 47. As Jesus spoke these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

They answered him, We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man. How sayest thou ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin, and the servant abideth not in the house forever, but the Son abideth forever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

I know that ye are Abraham's seed, but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and ye do that which ye have seen with your Father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.

Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham, but now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father.

Then said they to him, We are not born of fornication, but we have one Father, even God. Jesus saith unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech, even because ye cannot hear my word? Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.

He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Which of you convicteth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words. Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. There is no true freedom apart from Jesus Christ.

Most of us remember from our high school and college days that the French writer Voltaire was very anti-religion. He spent much of his life crusading against tyranny, and unfortunately he saw a great deal of religious tyranny in the church of his day in his country. But when Voltaire was an old man, Benjamin Franklin came to visit him, and Benjamin Franklin brought with him his own grandson, who was seventeen years old.

After chatting a while, Franklin said to Voltaire, Would you give to my grandson a blessing? And this old man lifted up his hands, put them on the boy's head, and he said, My child, God and liberty remember those two words. Well, it's a smart man who puts God and liberty in the same breath. We do this in one of our patriotic hymns, Our Father's God to Thee, Author of Liberty.

The writers of the Declaration of Independence did this. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Jesus Christ did this.

He wasn't talking about political freedom. The Jews were. We are Abraham's sons.

We have never been in bondage to anyone. At that very hour, they were under the iron heel of Rome. So often when our Lord talked about spiritual things, people misinterpreted and thought about material things, fleshly things.

He said, You must be born again. Nicodemus said, How can I get old? How can I be born again? When I'm old, I can't get back into my mother's womb. Our Lord was talking about spiritual birth.

He said to the woman at the well, The water that I shall give you will be in you. An artesian well producing everlasting life. She said, You haven't even got a bucket.

He was talking about spiritual water. She was talking about material. He said to the Jewish congregation one day, My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

They said, How can he give us his flesh to eat? He wasn't talking about that. He was talking spiritually. He was saying, You have to feed on me.

And so when he addressed this Jewish group of people who were somewhat hostile, he said, You need liberty. You need liberty. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

And they said, How can you talk to us about freedom? We've never been in bondage to anyone. John chapter 8 verse 32 is a tremendous statement to lay hold of. Our Lord Jesus says to us today, as he said to those people years ago, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

Let's talk today about freedom. And let's notice that our Lord makes three affirmations in this text that point the way to true freedom. Now, I'm going to say in preface that there are many people who don't know what freedom is.

They know what salvation is, but they don't know what freedom is. It's possible to be a saved person and not really be enjoying the freedom that Jesus died to give to us. And so let's look at these three affirmations and see if you and I can learn today what it really means to be free.

Affirmation number one, there is such a thing as truth. And ye shall know the truth. Not ye shall know some facts, not ye shall get a little bit of knowledge.

Ye shall know the truth. There is such a thing as truth. Now, people deny this.

Modern man says there are no absolutes. And I raise my hand and say, Does that include the statement you just made? There are no absolutes. Fine, let me cash your check.

There are no absolutes. So instead of giving you dollar bills, I'll give you quarters. Oh, you can't do that.

But you said there's no absolute. There's absolutes in money. Granted, the values go up and down, but the figures remain the same.

A dollar is a dollar, 100 pennies. Ten dollars remains ten dollars. There are absolutes in money.

There are absolutes in medicine. An aspirin is an aspirin. It's not arsenic.

When you go down to the pharmacy and you take your prescription and he reads it, he's dealing with absolutes and he has to go buy a code book, a pharmaceutical code book that determines the quality and the quantity. Those are absolutes. There are absolutes in mechanics.

You drive your automobile into a garage and you say, I need another alternator. I have to have a carburetor. There's something wrong with the brakes.

And they have a bunch of interchanging parts. And they go off to the stockroom and they find the right number and bring it out and put it in. There are absolutes.

An inch is an inch. A millimeter is a millimeter. Now, if there are absolutes in these areas, why can there not be absolutes in the most important area of all, the spiritual? The same God who made matter made the soul.

The same God who determined how long a day should be and how long a month should be and how long a year should be has determined what is right and what is wrong. There is such a thing as the truth. Of course, Satan denies this.

Yea, hath God said. Oh, you can't really believe that there is such a thing as the truth. Actually, God has given the truth to us in three different editions.

Jesus Christ says, thy word is truth. John 17, 17. Not thy word is true.

That is a correct statement. But thy word is truth. So the Bible is true.

Jesus said, I am the truth. So Jesus is the truth. In 1 John 5, in verse 6, it says, the spirit is truth.

The Bible is truth. Jesus Christ is truth. The Holy Spirit is truth.

And these three always work together. Someone says, oh, the Holy Spirit led me to do this. But my Bible says that what he does is wrong.

The Holy Spirit didn't lead him. Unholy Spirit led him. The Spirit of God and the Word of God and the Son of God always work together.

They never contradict one another. Whatever begins with the Spirit of God will be complemented by the Word of God and will bring glory to the Son of God because the Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ and to teach the Bible. There is such a thing as the truth.

Now, if I speak to someone right now who says, well, I think that life is rather hazy, there are no absolutes. Therefore, I can live any way I please. I can believe what I believe.

My friend, I have news for you. If you're believing something contrary to God's Word, you're not believing truth. If you're believing something contrary to God's Son, you're not believing truth.

If you're believing something contrary to the Spirit of God, you're not believing truth. There is such a thing as the truth. And the reason our world is in the mess it's in today is because people have gotten away from the truth.

Now, our Lord makes a second affirmation in John 8, 32, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. There is such a thing as the truth. Secondly, the truth can be known.

The truth is not something hidden that we must search for. The truth can be known. I confess to you that I enjoy reading philosophy.

It stretches my mind and I learn something. I'm never afraid of truth. All truth comes from God.

But it's more fun to read these philosophers who tell you that nothing can be known and they write a book to prove it. Harry Rimmer once said that a philosopher, an unsaved philosopher, is a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat that isn't there. Now, there is a Christian philosophy and it wouldn't hurt some Christians to start learning a little bit of what this whole world is all about.

Philosophy just means the love of truth, the love of wisdom. And there's nothing wrong with godly philosophy, thinking God's thoughts after him. But oh, the book of Colossians, Paul warns us about empty philosophies who say you can't know anything.

Jesus says you can. You can know the truth. The truth can be known.

Now, in your Bible, the word no, K-N-O-W, doesn't just mean intellectual understanding. In the Bible, the word no, K-N-O-W, refers to an intimate relationship between a person and God. The word no, K-N-O-W, is used to describe the intimate relationship between a husband and and Adam knew his wife.

In the Bible, knowledge is not just intellectual assent. That was the problem Jesus had with these people in verse 30. They said, oh, we believe, we believe.

Jesus said, wait a minute, wait a minute. What do you believe? If you continue in my word, then you'll prove that you are really believers. But I don't think you are.

And they weren't. At the end of this chapter, they tried to stone him. Not everyone who says, oh, yes, intellectually, I will accept the truth, is born again.

If I understand my Bible correctly, the word no, K-N-O-W, involves a total commitment. It means it involves the mind and the heart and the will, the whole of man yielded to the truth of God. Do you know that whatever you yield to controls you? Here's a man who yields to alcohol, and alcohol controls him.

Here's a person who yields to the love of money, and money controls him. Covetousness. Here's a person who yields to a lie.

Oh, the millions of people in the world today who believe a lie, and they've dedicated themselves to a lie, and that lie controls them. Jesus says, I want you to know the truth. I want you to have a total and complete and intimate involvement with truth.

Now, you'll remember I said that God gave us the truth in three editions. God's Word is truth, God's Son is truth, and God's Spirit is truth. Do you know why God gave us the truth in these three editions? It's because each of these editions of the truth responds to a different part in the inner man.

God has given me His Word as truth. I have a book that my mind can study. God has given me His Son as truth.

I have a person that my heart can love. God has given me His Spirit as truth. Here is the Holy Spirit in my will, and He gives my will the power to do the truth.

And so my mind, and my heart, and my will can be completely controlled by truth. We have multitudes of people in our churches who have a head knowledge of the Bible, but they have no heart love for Jesus Christ. And you can always pick them out because they love to argue.

Anybody whose knowledge of truth is only in the head loves to argue, because all this pressure is up in the head, and it's got to come out someplace, and it comes out the mouth. Now, when we are yielded to the Lord mentally, the Word of God teaches us, and we learn truth. The heart must be in love with the truth, Jesus Christ.

The Word of God leads us to the Son of God. Do you remember when Jesus was conducting that walking Bible conference on the road to Emmaus? And here were these two discouraged men, and they'd lost their Savior, they'd lost their hope, they'd lost their Bible, they'd lost everything. And the Lord just began at Moses and the prophets, and they just went right through the Word of God, and He taught them about Himself.

Didn't teach them doctrine, taught them about Himself. All doctrine points to Jesus. And when it was all over, remember what they said? Did not our heart burn within us as He opened to us the Scriptures? That's what the Word of God is supposed to do, when the Word of God reveals the Son of God.

And so with my mind, I can understand the truth. With my heart, I can love the truth, because Jesus is a person to love. And with my will, I can do the truth.

For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. That's the Holy Spirit. This is the Christian life.

The Christian life is not giving intellectual assent to a body of doctrines. The Christian life is not having emotional upheavals. The Christian life is not trying to do something.

It's all together. With the mind, we learn the truth. And with the heart, we love the truth.

And with the will, we live the truth. This is discipleship. Jesus said to them, now, if you continue in My Word, if you keep on in the Word, learning the truth, then you'll be My disciples indeed, and the truth will make you free.

There is such a thing as the truth. The Word of God, the Son of God, the Spirit of God. Our God is the God of truth.

The truth may be known. You say, well, then why don't I know the truth? Because in one of these three areas, you failed. Oh, I meet Christians who can outline Bible books, they can draw charts of prophecy, but their hearts are so filled with criticism and hatred and venom and spite, and they don't have love.

I meet some Christians who really are ignorant of God's Word, but they try to work up an emotional love in their hearts. They want to love everybody. Sometimes in my own life, I confess to you, I've had the truths in my mind, I've had the love in my heart, but it's never gotten to my will.

The truth is not just something that we learn, the truth is something that we live. We do it. And so, heart and mind and will collectively, together, must be yielded to the truth.

Jesus Christ makes it very clear that disobedience robs us of learning the truth. He says, if any man is willing to do his will, he'll know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge.

I have sat and talked with people, and we've gone over the Word of God, and they've said, I don't understand. I said, you won't understand until you do it. You've got to do it.

When we do what God says, then we know what God means. I don't know how you feel about it, but to me, one of the greatest adventures in life is growing in the knowledge of truth, learning God's truth. All truth comes from God.

If it's a lie, it comes from the devil. All truth comes from God. God gives truth, Satan gives lies.

Truth always leads to freedom. Lies lead to bondage. Truth always leads to victory.

Lies always lead to defeat. There is such a thing as the truth. The truth can be known.

Now, have you yielded your mind to God? Are you permitting God to teach you truth? Or have you put around your mind walls of tradition, walls of man-made ideas, fears that keep you from growing and growing? You see, with the mind, we can enjoy and learn God's truth. With the heart, we can love God's truth. And then with the will, we can obey God's truth.

This makes for a whole life. It makes for a united life, a life of integrity. But there's a third affirmation our Lord makes here.

There is such a thing as the truth. The truth can be known if you'll yield your mind and your heart and your will to God. And thirdly, when the truth is known, it makes you free.

Now, there are those who preach God's truth and use it as propaganda and put people into bondage. Any ministry of the Word of God that puts you into bondage is not a spiritual ministry. The truth is a seed, and when a seed is planted, it breaks loose, it grows, it produces fruit.

And in that fruit, there's more seed, and that seed produces more fruit. When you lay hold of truth, there's freedom. Not anarchy, not licentiousness, not antinomianism against the law, but true spiritual freedom.

You see, Jesus was talking to religious people who were in bondage. They'd been trained by the Pharisees. And the Pharisees said, you don't do this, you don't do that, you don't go here and you weigh this and you measure that, and you do this.

And they were religious and they were in bondage. They were brittle. Somebody wound them up every morning and they went through their little routine.

We have many Christians like that. We have cookie cutter Christians. There's no freedom.

No growth, no development, no joy. Oh, don't read that, don't study that, don't look at that. My dear friend, when you know God's truth, don't be afraid of anything, because God's truth will show up the devil's lies.

When your mind is saturated with God's truth, when your heart is in love with God's truth, when your will is doing God's truth, then you are a true person. That's why Jesus said to these people, oh, you say you're going to be my disciples. All right.

You believed in me. All right. If you continue in my word, then you'll be my disciples indeed.

And you'll know the truth and the truth will make you free. And they start arguing with him. Friend, you don't argue with truth.

You accept it. If a truth comes along that smashes something that you hold very dearly, it smashes. Truth is going to endure.

God's truth is marching on. Paul says we can do nothing against the truth, only for the truth. The truth comes smashing through.

I count that a red letter day in my life when God gives to me some truth I'd never seen before. You sort of feel like you've grown. Your spiritual muscles have grown.

Then you go out and you do that truth. And that truth becomes a part of your personality, a part of your spiritual makeup. And then he gives you more truth.

That's true discipleship. You see, Satan is offering lies to people. Satan says, oh, I want to blind your mind.

I don't want your mind to get truth. I want your mind to get lies. I don't want your heart to love God.

I want your heart to love the world and to love sin. I don't want your will to be serving God. I want your will to be serving me.

And so Satan comes and plants lies, religious lies, into people's minds. And those lies grow. And before long, people are controlled by lies instead of controlled by truth.

We'd better stop every once in a while and take inventory and say, what do I really believe? And how am I behaving because of what I believe? Has the truth of God gotten from my mind to my heart so that I love Him? And do I love Him so much that I will obey Him no matter what the cost may be? Most of us are content to stay away from truth because we're afraid of it. Jesus says, no, don't be afraid of truth. The truth will make you free.

It'll make your mind free. You won't be led astray by the lies of Satan. It'll make your heart free.

When truth gets a hold of your heart and you love the truth, you don't want the cheap things that are in the garbage cans of the world. When you do the truth, it builds character. It makes the kind of person that God wants you to be.

Satan said, I want that. I want you to believe the lies and I'll put you into bondage. Jesus said, if you believe the truth and live the truth, it'll make you free.

Now, what kind of freedom is he talking about? Freedom from sin. Sin and lies always go together. Satan's the liar and he's the murderer.

Wherever there's a lie, there's going to be death. A lie will kill your conscience. It'll kill your power, might kill your life.

Wherever there's truth, there's life. Wherever there's lies, there's death. Wherever there's truth, there's freedom.

Wherever there are lies, there's bondage. Wherever there is truth, there's light. Wherever there is lies, there's darkness.

That's why Jesus said you got to make your choice. Is God going to be your father? If he is, you'll love me and you'll love the truth. Is Satan going to be your father? If that's the case, he's a murderer.

He'll kill you. You've got to make your choice. What kind of freedom is he talking about? The kind of freedom that he had.

Jesus Christ is the most free man who ever walked the face of the earth. He was free from worrying about circumstances. He was free from worrying about people.

He was free from sin. And he dares to say to you and me, if you walk in the truth, if you love the truth, if you dedicate yourself to truth, that truth will make you free. And you'll not be robbed of the joys of life by circumstances or people or problems.

Oh, you'll have your struggles. You'll have your calvary. Anyone who ever lives a free life will be crucified by somebody, if only by his fellow saints who envy his freedom.

Jesus said, now, if you follow sin, sin makes a slave out of you. And the slave is not permanent in the household. The slave can be kicked out of the household.

You better follow the son. The son stays in the household forever. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, but murder and lies came by Satan.

Take your choice. And so here's what he's saying to us. How are you responding to truth? The spirit of God takes the word of God and reveals the son of God.

How do you respond to truth? The spirit of God says you must be born again. How do you respond to truth? Jesus said, except you believe that I am he, you'll die in your sins. How do you respond to truth? Our Lord says, I am the way, not one of many ways.

How do you respond to that? God's word says you, you must be born again. How do you respond to that? How the way you respond to truth determines your eternal destiny. The way you respond to truth determines your character.

The way you respond to truth determines the life that we live. How will you respond to truth? How did they respond? Well, they argued with him. Then they said down in verse 48, you're a Samaritan.

You've got a demon. Do you ever notice that when people don't want to receive truth, they attack the preacher? Then at the end of this chapter, they pick up stones and try to kill him. You know why? They believe the lie.

And the liar is Satan. And Satan's a murderer. And when you believe a lie, you become like your father.

And he's a murderer. And so this message goes right through the city of Chicago today, right through this congregation today and says there is no middle ground. It's either truth or lies.

It's either Jesus Christ or Satan. It's either freedom or bondage. It's either life or murder.

Which would be there is no true liberty without Jesus Christ. Religion never gives you liberty. It's not strong enough.

Philosophy never gives you liberty. It's not smart enough. Man cannot give you liberty.

He's not big enough. Only Jesus Christ can give you liberty. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

And if the Son shall make you free, S-O-N, if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. Not a false liberty. But a true liberty.

I commend to you today, Jesus Christ, the truth. I commend to you today the word of God and the gospel of that word, the truth. That Jesus Christ died for our sins and arose again.

That he might be our Redeemer and set us free. I commend to you the Holy Spirit who, if you are saved, lives in you and wants to use your will to do the truth. Oh, may God help us to be free people.

A mind that is free to learn God's truth. A heart that is free to love God's truth. A will that is set free to live God's truth.

And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. Gracious Father in heaven, we can think of no worse bondage than a mind, a heart, a will enslaved to the lies of sin and Satan. Thank you, Father, that no matter how the body may be bound or shackled, we are free in the inner man.

Thank you, gracious Father, for sending Jesus Christ, who, when he walked on this earth, lived free. And because he lived free, those who were in bondage hated him and killed him. But oh, your truth cannot be killed.

He arose again and he's now the glorified King in heaven. Thank you for your word, which is truth. Thank you for giving it.

Thank you for the men of God who were moved by the Holy Spirit and wrote this book. And Satan hates this book and he's tried to do away with it. But your truth has always risen up from the grave.

Thank you for the Bible. Thank you for the Holy Spirit that he lives within us. He teaches us the truth in the word and he transforms us to become like the truth in Jesus.

We would today, Father, as an act of dedication, surrender our minds and our hearts and our wills to you. Take your word and fill our minds with truth. May your son so enthrall our hearts and may your spirit so control our wills that we will do the truth, that we will be true people, that we will enjoy true freedom that leads to growth and power and victory and godly influence that sets other people free.

Oh, deliver us, Lord, from the shackles, even the religious shackles that men would forge. May we enjoy this freedom in Christ to his glory. Help that sinner today to trust Christ and be saved and step out of the darkness and the bondage of sin into the light and liberty of Christ, I pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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