**Free Indeed**

 ***31****So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,****32****and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”****33****They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?”*

***34****Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.****35****The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.****36****So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:31-36, ESV)*

 The one who is truly free is the one freed by Christ.

Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters as we commemorate the independence that was won on these shores of the USA, all the while transcending the occasion and meditating aloud on our true and eternal freedom. The passage for today shows us that slavery and bondage often have a blindness that tags along with them. Often, the one who considers themselves free is blind to what they need, except when they are in constant contact with and open to the spiritually freeing interactions with their fellow members of God’s community (the church). Today, our reading shows us this exact kind of bondage and blindness, but also the identity of the true Bearer of Freedom, our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, the truly free person is the one freed by Christ. Let us talk about this genuine freedom…

If the Son sets us free, then we will truly be free. The Scripture passage is very interesting because it is situated among some important teachings by Jesus. Beginning with the chapter itself, Jesus redeems the woman caught in adultery. Then, He declares Himself the light of the world – in other words, that Jesus saves us from darkness. Further, we see that He declares His own departure from this world, but that the wrong-spirited questioning by the Jewish leadership showed their spiritual blindness. With that kind of spirit, they had made the devil their father, unfortunately. Finally, we reach our passage in question, in which Jesus describes the true nature of freedom.

The Jewish religious leaders thought that they were free people – even forgetting that they were then under Roman occupation and oppression. They had forgotten that true freedom was of a spiritual nature. They considered themselves as children of God’s household, but they were living as slaves with no inheritance. If they would live as children, because that is what they were called to be as God’s children, then they would remain in God’s house forever. However, the one to free them into that lifestyle had to be the Son – without Him, they would remain slaves.

This is like someone who has everything put together in their lives. They are perfectly presentable every time you meet them. A single strand of hair is not out of place. A single piece of dust does not exist in their house. Their floor sparkles, the clothing worn is impeccably worn, their words are perfect, their expressions are balanced, everything about them is well, even perfect. Suddenly, you that this person has either committed suicide or is hospitalized.

True, genuine freedom is a completely spiritual reality which shows through in a person’s life through their fruits over time. If we have only been focused on our external lives, it is time to change our perspective. It is time for us to clean the inside of the cup, as Jesus said, and then, only afterwards, work on the external cleanliness. The Pharisees, for example, had studied their external piety so much that their internal spiritual life had taken a back seat, or had become secondary.

Today the world wants to invite us to be “put-together” externally only. So, in answer to that temptation, let us think long about Jesus’ words: “Whoever sins (as a constant lifestyle) is the slave of sin.” He also said, “If the Son sets you free, you will truly be free.” Let us truly be free. Let us experience our freedom that comes from the Son.

If there are specific situations that require focused prayer for God to intervene, let us come before the Son together, who can free us from all kinds of bondage and spiritual servitude.

When the Son, the Lord Jesus frees us, that is when true freedom happens. May the Lord Bless you. Amen.