Devotion #272

**Free Forever!**

***John 8:36 (NASB)*** *“If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”*

I have been to jail many, many times. Now before you have a heart attack and wonder why a pastor has gone to jail so many times, I wasn’t put in jail for some crime; I was visiting people who were in jail for some crime, and even though I have never been put in jail for breaking the law, I can tell you it is the most wonderful, freeing feeling when I am able to go home and not stay in that terrible place. Each time I go I am forever thankful that I am able to walk out those doors and not look back.

Most people will tell you that jail is a horrible place. They keep it cold so germs don’t spread as rapidly as they would in a warmer environment, and the food is tolerable at best. There are jobs that inmates can work and they are paid, but the pay is only pennies per hour which makes it difficult to buy needed supplies from the prison or jail store. In times past, family or friends could send material directly to inmates, but now much of that has stopped. There are visitation times, but even those times are monitored, and the jails and prisons are so full, there is no where to go to get free from the issues of others.

You might be saying, “Good. It’s prison. No one should have freedom there anyway.”, and you would be right. Prison is for those who have lost their freedoms; that’s why they are there. It is a horrible place. It is a miserable existence.

But even saying that, God is there. God is there in prison with the inmates who have surrendered their hearts to Him, and they are more free than many people who work and live regular lives. I have been in worship services in prisons with over 300 men singing praises at the top of their lungs, and I have met some of the strongest believers there who I have ever known because Jesus has set their hearts free.

Freedom comes as a result of knowing Jesus not from what people have or don’t have. He is the One who sets a heart free from the bondage of life. There are many people who are in bondage and don’t realize it or know how to be free from it. I’m taking about people who are in financial bondage or bondage to the emotional effects of life or even in bondage to their spouses or bad relationships. Sadly, most people just end up existing and doing all they can to make the best of the situation.

The problem comes to people because of what Jesus said. **John 8:34 (NASB)** *"Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.”* That’s everyone. (Romans 3:23) which puts us in great bondage, but Jesus came to set us free. He is like the prison warden who has the power to keep people locked away or to set them free. The joy of all joys is that His desire is to set people free. **Romans 8:2 (NASB)** *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”* This freedom starts with our hearts. We first must give him our very lives and fully surrender to Him. At that point we will be filled with the Holy Spirit and set free from the bondage of sin and its effects.

What is keeping you in your life of bondage? What is so great that you feel like you just exist instead of live life? Jesus has the answer. He will not necessarily fix everything, but He will give you a free heart in the midst of the struggles and a heart that is able to enjoy life in the midst of challenges. Won’t you give your problems to Him? See yourself handing over all your life issues and yourself to Jesus. See Him taking them from you, and you will find the freedom you are looking for. This will be the best and most wonderful day of your life. You might be saying, “I’ve done that before, and it didn’t help”. Do it again and again until you have really let go. Usually when we hand something to Jesus, we keep pulling it back by worrying or trying to figure out how to deal with it. If you give something to Him, you have to really give it to Him. He can and will take it. Then your heart will be free – no longer in bondage. Then He will give you the wisdom to know how to live in freedom.