

Breaking Free

- *John 8:36*

- **This week we will celebrate our nation's independence & the freedoms that have been given to us by the men & women who have stood for this country for over 200 years.**
 - As a country, we have been given many freedoms & liberties that millions could only hope for or dream about.
 - Our government & our military have defended the freedoms of this country & fought to help us remain liberated.
- **Yet as you look at our country and even our world today, many claim to be free, but are living each day in bondage & have become hopeless of ever being truly free.**
 - We are told that for most, the worst sentence a person sent to prison can have is not the death sentence but life imprisonment. That is the hardest thing for any person to bear.
 - All through the wars, people in concentration camps risked their lives under penalty of the most horrible consequences to try to get FREE. They would dig tunnels with their bare hands and make the most tremendous efforts TO ESCAPE. Why? Freedom was priceless! To be a slave is a life of misery and despair. What every man longs for is to be free.
- **God did not intend for us to be enslaved, but to be free.**
- **This morning, we will take a look at 3 different types of bondage that occurred in the scriptures & how these are real examples of the bondage that many people are facing today. We will see not only how this affected their lives, but more importantly how they reclaimed their freedom & broke free from their bondage.**

I. **Bondage In Sin (Mark 5:1-5)**

a. **Satan was out to get him.**

- i. We are not told how the demons entered this man and took control, but more than likely it was the result of some type of yielding to sin.
 - 1. Let me say this about demonic existence. Often time's people will laugh & even doubt the power of Satan's demons; but rest assured, they are real.
 - 2. Tampering with the occult, getting involved with drugs, and flagrant immorality are all means whereby evil spirits get hold of people, invade their bodies, and control their souls.
 - 3. Movies are made to make a mockery of the power of demons, but as we see in this man's life, they have consumed him & have destroyed his life.
- ii. Once Satan had a foothold in his life, his next step was to enslave him in bondage and consume him completely.
 - 1. Maybe you are here this morning & you are certainly not to the point of demon possession, but there is a sin or certain sins that you struggle with in your life.
 - 2. Is there some sin that constantly is on your mind and you find yourself falling after this temptation time and time again?
 - 3. Perhaps you are in denial to the bondage of sin, but those closest to you see its affects in you.
- iii. Satan was not out to disrupt this man's life, he was looking to destroy him.

1. I Peter 5:8-9 – “As a roaring lion...”
2. Satan is never satisfied with just being a part of your life; he desires to control it and to destroy you!

b. Society could not help him.

- i. This man was cast out of the city because he was a danger to himself & most definitely to those around him.
 1. Let's just be honest, the people were scared of him & were not interested in helping him, they just wanted to get him away from them.
- ii. Often they would chain these men to help control them, but he was so consumed with evil spirits that he had broken his chains and was running rampant.
- iii. Now we find him living in tombs & among the dead because of the wickedness of his spirit.
- iv. Bondage of sin is very real. If you are involved in some type of sin & you think you are in control of it, let me tell you ... it already has you in its chains.

II. Bondage in Sickness (II Kings 5:9-14)

- Here was this great mighty general in the Syrian army. He had everything, he had all the medals, all the wealth, all the accolades, all of the honor, he had it all, but the Bible says he was a leper.
- Leprosy was not a disease that was cured. The prescription was to be cast out of the city & sent to live in a leper village with the rest until the sickness claimed your life.
- Naaman could have easily just given up & even been upset with God for allowing this to happen to him.
 - o I am sure he wondered, “Why me?”
- Perhaps this morning, sickness has bound you & is slowly defeating you & you wonder where any hope can come from.

III. Bondage In Circumstances (Acts 12:1-7)

- a. Bondage of sin & sickness are terrible places to be; but let's be honest, that's not the only places we find ourselves enslaved.
 - i. Peter found himself literally in bondage b/c of the circumstances in his life.
 - ii. The Bible tells us that King Herod had sought out to quiet the early church & he did this by using his power to bring harm to any who would stand up for or preach the name of Jesus Christ.
 1. In v.2 we are told that he killed James, the brother of John, with a sword.
 2. And now he has found Peter & took him into prison in an effort to bring fear to the faith of the early Christians.
 3. In v.6 we are told that Peter was physically bound with chains.
 - iii. Now though most of you have never been imprisoned before, I guarantee that most of us throughout our lives have felt as though we were in some kind of bondage.
- b. Perhaps this morning your bondage is not sin, but it's the circumstances that you find surrounding your life today. Perhaps you're trying to do the right thing as Peter was doing, yet you still find yourself bound.
 - i. Physical Sickness binds you.
 - ii. Depression leaves you in bondage.
 - iii. Financial bondage
 - iv. Perhaps you feel as though your job has you in bondage.

- v. Relationships will often times bind you.

IV. Bondage Is Broken

- **All of these situations look helpless & none of us would ever expect or want to find ourselves in either of their shoes. But what can we do when we found ourselves in bondage? How can we expect to be delivered from our situation today? Each of these men made some important steps in being delivered from bondage:**

a. Possessed Man Came to Jesus (Mark 5:6)

- i. One of the beautiful pictures we have time and again in scripture is the openness that all have in coming to Jesus.
 - 1. Jesus did not come just for the Jews.
 - 2. He didn't come just to minister to the rich.
 - 3. Jesus came so that ALL might come to Him.
- ii. The Bible tells us that this man was completely overtaken with demons, no one could do anything with him, everyone was scared of him & he had even broken the chains that they had bound him with.
- iii. But when Jesus came to him, he was changed. Not gradually. Not after a period of time. He was changed INSTANTLY, and he would never be the same again.
- iv. Regardless of the sin that you may struggle with today or even the sin of your past, if you will come to Jesus today, He will make a change that is forever.
 - 1. This man was known for his wicked & sinful lifestyle, but he didn't allow that to stop him from coming to Jesus.
 - 2. And even after Jesus changed him, he used his testimony as a means to lead others to Jesus.
- v. You don't have to be this wicked or sinful in order to trust in Jesus, but the change is just as dramatic regardless of your past.
 - 1. The change is not about us, it's about Him.
 - 2. The grace that God gives to us truly is amazing & can change the wicked sinner's heart & make it white as snow.

b. Naaman Was Obedient (II Kings 5:14)

- i. Naaman heard the command of the prophet.
 - 1. Now just to be honest, many of us never get this far. We can't be delivered from our bondage & follow the Lord in obedience b/c we won't even take time to listen to God.
 - a. Romans 10:17 – "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - 2. We listen to our friends, our family, our co-workers, even our enemies, but we never take time to listen to God.
- ii. Naaman put aside his own logic.
 - 1. How many of us have put a plan together or prayed with the thought, "Lord, this is how I want you to answer this request."
 - 2. I want to read to you a very important verse, a verse I have to remind myself of from time to time.
 - a. Isaiah 55:9 – "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

3. You know what that verse tells me? My ways are certainly not always best & are never on the same level as God's ways.
 4. Naaman felt like Elisha should come down & physically lay hands on him, but instead he sent some servant. To summarize, his pride was hurt.
 - a. Listen, sometimes waiting on the Lord is not always the quick answer we are looking for. Often times when we are trying to serve God, there are more questions than answers in our life.
 - b. But what God is looking for is your faith & your obedience.
 5. Naaman could have stood there & demanded that Elisha come. But he put his own logic to the side.
- iii. Naaman obeyed completely.
1. It was not enough for him just to go to the river, or to dip a time or two, it was necessary that he did 7 times just as he was commanded.
 2. I am convinced that we don't see the blessing of God on our lives in full b/c we don't obey Him completely.
 - a. We may dip 1 or 2 times. We may even have extraordinary faith & decide to dip 4 or 5 times.

c. Peter Was Delivered Through Prayer (Acts 12:5)

- i. Peter did not have the luxury of Jesus coming directly to Him in order to deliver him from bondage as He did the possessed man.
- ii. But the power of God was ever present in his situation nonetheless.
- iii. Though Peter was in bondage, Jesus was nowhere around, and his situation seemed helpless, he still had 2 things going for him:
 1. People were praying for him.
 - a. Listen to me folks. The value of prayer can never be underestimated.
 - b. No matter how bad the situation, how dim the circumstance, or how difficult the task, I pray we all be persistent in our prayer life.
 - i. Acts 12:5 – "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."
 - ii. Romans 1:9 – "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;"
 - iii. I Thessalonians 5:17 – "Pray without ceasing."
 - iv. James 5:16 – "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - c. As a child of God, prayer for your soul should be just as important as food for your body. You see folks, there is power in prayer. When we pray, we are showing that our faith is not in ourselves, but in God.
 - d. In the same manner, as important as prayer is to us, it is just as important to others in their time of need.
 - i. What if God's people hadn't been busy praying?
 2. God was still in control.
 - a. This is the greatest comfort in any situation that comes our way. As chaotic & messed up as our lives seem to be at times, God is always in control.

b. We are coming before the throne of the Most High, the King of Kings. Yet He listens intently as a Heavenly Father would.

i. I John 5:14-15 – “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

• **This morning, you may be under the bondage of something that you wonder if you will ever be free from. But let me remind you, if anyone’s situation was hopeless, it was the man from Gerasene. If anyone thought life was unfair, it was Naamna. And if anyone seemed that they were treated unfairly or forgotten, surely it was Peter. There seemed to be no hope for either of them. There seemed to be no one who understood what they were going through or could help them. But then Jesus intervened & delivered them.**

- If you are under the bondage of sin this morning, you have don’t have to leave this place the same way. God can deliver you from any sin. He has made a way through the blood of Jesus Christ whereby we can come directly before His throne & plead the blood of Christ on our lives. Will you come to Him today?
- Perhaps the bondage of sickness has just devastated you & you feel as there is no hope for deliverance.
 - God still has the power to heal, regardless of your situation.
 - And if He chooses not to heal, He has an unlimited supply of grace that He can give to see you through this battle.
- Maybe today, you are bound in the circumstances of life.
 - You are trying to do right. You want to do right. But it seems as though the fire around you is consuming you. Why don’t you call on One today who can deliver you from any storm that you are facing.