

1. Freedom, in its nature, has to do with Truth
  - a. John 8:31-32 – “If you abide in my word, then you are my disciples, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.”
    - i. There is no experience of true freedom apart from Truth
    - ii. Yet, it seems that some in Corinth were were disconnecting gospel freedom from truth of His Word, and therefore from love for others
      1. Therefore, Paul admonished them, “*but not all things edify*” and “*but not all things are beneficial*” – these are Truth from His Words to love one another
      2. They were acting self-centeredly, when, if they had been abiding in His Word, they would have acted out of love for others
    - iii. True freedom is grounded and sourced in Truth, that which is consistent with the character and revelation of God Himself, from whom all things exist and in whom all things continue to exist
  - b. Truth, in its nature, has to do with Christ
    - i. “I am the way, the truth, and the life. Nobody comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)
    - ii. “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (8:36)
    - iii. There is no experience of true freedom apart from the person of Jesus Christ.
      1. This is increasingly denied by the world in its confusion, and its confusion regarding freedom is evidence of such a denial
      2. The more pluralistic we become, nay, the more that we reject the exclusive claims of Christ Jesus, the more we struggle with the entire concept of both Truth and Freedom
    - iv. This is why secular psychology, the world’s answer to soul care for soul problems, has found no real freedom for the soul’s great and abundant problems
      1. Their models of humanity’s purpose, function, and ideal all deny that sin is the root of all our problems and ultimately have to do with God
      2. When that is denied, then counsel becomes a lengthy process of chasing mere symptom alleviation through various means of self-help, needs reconditioning, or chemically balancing an invisible teeter-totter of moods.
    - v. The Christian, however, views the problem that humanity is bound up in as “sin and misery due to idolatry”.
      1. Every problem is ultimately a worship problem.
        - a. Every relational problem
          - i. Is a lack of proper love, appreciation, and obedience to God
        - b. Every social problem
          - i. Is a lack of proper humility, submission, and appreciation to God
        - c. Every physiological problem.
          - i. Is the result of the curse of sin, which is the lack of love, appreciation, and worship of God
          - ii. Hope is key here, for even with proper worship restored by Christ Jesus, we must await the “redemption of our bodies” through resurrection.
        - d. Every psychological problem.
          - i. Like physiological brokenness due to sin, so is emotional, rational, motivational, and volitional brokenness due to misplaced worship.
          - ii. Sin is the problem underneath every brokenness of the self.
      2. The Scripture has a two word answer for such bondage to sin and misery: Jesus Christ the Atoning Savior & Reigning King of Life.

- vi. In fact, most of what is held out to people as “Freedom” is actually bondage
  - 1. “all things are lawful, but I will not be mastered by anything” (6:12)
  - 2. Sexual liberty, freedom to self-identify as whatever you *feel* that you are, freedom from debt, “just be true to yourself”, etc. are really all ways of glorying in *Self*
    - a. They make my wisdom the center of the universe, my desires the center of the universe, my attainments the center of the universe, my choices the center of the universe, my assessments the center of Truth
      - i. This is so much a part of our human problem that we don’t even see it anymore.
      - ii. We are blind.
      - iii. But, as we saw last week, making ourselves the center of our universes just places us under the mastery/lordship of our own deceitful hearts, and these are not *good* masters
    - b. They continually avoid the real problem: the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
      - i. “The most experienced psychologist or observer of human nature knows infinitely less of the human heart than the simplest Christian who lives beneath the Cross of Jesus. The greatest psychological insight, ability, and experience cannot grasp this one thing: what sin is. Worldly wisdom knows what distress and weakness and failure are, but it does not know the godlessness of man. And so it also does not know that man is destroyed only by his sin and can be healed only by forgiveness. Only the Christian knows this. In the presence of a psychiatrist I can only be a sick man; in the presence of a Christian brother I can dare to be a sinner. The psychiatrist must first search my heart and yet he never plumbs its ultimate depth. The Christian brother knows when I come to him: here is a sinner like myself, a godless man who wants to confess and yearns for God’s forgiveness. The psychiatrist views me as if there were no God. The brother views me as I am before the judging and merciful God in the Cross of Jesus Christ.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*)
  - 3. All of these “liberties” make great promises of the fullness of life if you can attain their “freedoms”, but it is also true that we know people who are free in each of these areas who are not free in the soul.
    - a. Political freedom, parental freedom, etc. never deliver on the promises, rather they tend to lead to deeper and deeper bondage.
  - 4. In fact, these “liberties” actually enslave
    - a. They are a form of idolatry, looking to something that one can do or achieve, apart from God’s self-revelation, that will deliver freedom
    - b. And the church has done it historically as well
      - i. Asceticism, Monasticism, Moralism, self-denying abuse of the body which one believed would bring freedom
      - ii. “These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the Flesh.” (Col 2:23)
    - c. This is why we do not believe that our nation will ever be transformed through legislation, an exertion of power from the outside to restrain the actions of the bent soul.

- i. The law is useful in restraining the soul, but it cannot transform the soul.
  - vii. We must be transformed *in our worship*, in what we *trust in* to deliver us from our bondage and deliver true freedom, in what we *glory in*.
    - 1. The purpose and desire of Satan, that enemy of our souls, is to convince people that the gospel will place them in bondage and that freedom is found in “throwing off the chains” of God’s rule
    - 2. Psalm 2 (whole thing!)
  - viii. In this supposed freedom, we are not loving well, nor glorifying God.
- 2. Jesus is the most free man who ever lived, and His purpose is to glorify the Father (8:49)
  - a. This is our aim! This is our goal! This is true freedom!
    - i. This was Paul’s goal in laying down his liberties, to honor and glorify God as the Savior from our sin and idolatry
    - ii. It is the same goal of Christ, which we are to imitate, in the laying down of our power and freedoms in this world for the sake of others
      - 1. Our personal individual freedom is not the goal!
      - 2. Liberty is not the highest virtue!
      - 3. Do we consider this when we choose how to live? When confrontations and difficulties arrive in our relationships?
  - b. “Glory” comes from the word for “weight” – to glorify is to assign the most “weightiness” to something
    - i. It is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
    - ii. It is to not have any gods (saviors, deliverers, providers, etc.) before Him
  - c. Thus, to do everything “for the glory of God” is to do it with God as its purpose, its goal, and its treasure.
    - i. This is why we use the phrase, “see and savor” Christ Jesus.
    - ii. Because we believe that this is what we were made for, and this is where God is taking us, and this is the means of flourishing in life
      - 1. John 17:5 - Eternal life is to know God and His Son
  - d. How did Jesus glorify the Father?
    - i. Thus, it is in the proclamation of the glories of Christ and the salvation of people through Him that we glorify God!
      - 1. John 15:8 – “By this my Father is glorified: that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”
      - 2. God is glorified as man is disciples: baptized and taught to obey all that Christ Jesus commanded us.
    - ii. By laying down His “liberties” for the sake of sinners
    - iii. So, we too, in imitation of Him, are called to glorify God by laying down our liberties *so that all people might behold the glory of God and come to Him in repentance and faith*.
      - 1. If someone believes that by eating meat they will be sinning, then I will give that up so that they do not harden their conscience towards the real need to be saved from sin.
      - 2. The law of glorying in God requires the love of humanity and seeking their redemption through Christ Jesus, for Him, and in Him.
      - 3. “I am not seeking my own profit, but the profit of others, so that they may be saved.”
- 3. To See and Savor Christ, to Glorify God, is True Life and Liberty for Us
  - a. Every human endeavor and every human action is *made for this* because GOD IS REALLY GLORIOUS

- i. Stop and consider His glorious being, for this is the chief purpose of your existence: to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
- ii. His uncreated transcendence. His omnipotent independence. His timeless eternity. His unique fullness of simplicity, the perfections of every virtue comprehensively complete in every way.
- b. Therefore, EVERY human desire, feeling, and action is theological – it is having to do with God
  - i. There is no secular/religious compartmentalization of our lives
    - 1. From eating to drinking to playing to resting to working to weeping...
  - ii. EVERYTHING is SACRED – every freedom, every relationship, every thought, every feeling, every desire, every action is morally freighted vis-a-vis God.
  - iii. So, whatever you do, do it all to the glory of the one with highest glory: God Almighty
    - 1. 2 Corinthians 4:6 – the glory of God is known and shines in the face of Jesus Christ.
    - 2. Do you know Him? Really? How greatly? How deeply? How fully?
      - a. Eph 3:19 – prayer for the knowledge of Christ’s love, so that we are filled up with all the fullness of God
- c. Our theology matters WAY more than our methodology
  - i. Here at EBF, we don’t want you to learn the latest fad in self-help or church-growth, but rather to behold the ancient path which millions before you have tread over millennia, the apostolic gospel, the means of soul growth which the Creator Himself revealed as our salvation and the power of transformation: the good news of the sovereign, transcendent, personal, holy God who made the universe, sending His Son to die in our place, His image-bearers who rebelled to love and worship ourselves and thus, despite His forbearance, attract His implacable wrath, to achieve forgiveness and reconciliation through His blood and to pour out His Holy Spirit to make us new, to give us new eyes, to transform us into the fullness of His image, and will return again and raise these corruptible bodies up to incorruptibility where we will see fully and surely and treasure Him rightly and rejoice in the fullness of joy in His presence forever.
  - ii. Thus, the key to change, to living well, to growth, is to see Christ and to savor Him
    - 1. See
      - a. Do we pray to this end? Ephesians 1:17-19
      - b. Like this: “Lord God, unveil yourself! Tear my eyes open to behold your beauty, God of glory! Wake me up to know you, Savior of my godless soul! Enlighten the darkened eyes of my heart which chokes me, binds me, and shrinks me. Make me see!”
    - 2. Savor
      - a. Do we pray like this? Psalm 40
      - b. Let’s learn to by beholding the glory of God!
    - 3. Christ
      - a. Do we know Christ, or merely a caricature of Him, a sketch of our own making in the genre of our own self?
      - b. Do we know him from a distance, like a long-past memory in our minds clouded with time and the interference of our deceitful hearts’ assumptions, distracted by our unbelief in love of lesser things?
      - c. Or, are we coming to Him daily, expecting to be unmade and remade every time? To have our blinded eyes salved by His Word applied by His sovereign Spirit, opened to the futility of our own strength and goodness, and savoring the greatness of His salvation and mercies?
    - 4. WE WANT TO KNOW CHRIST TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER AND THE SOVEREIGN POWER OF HIS HOLY SPIRIT

It is at the cross that all my presumption and foolishness is crucified, where my willingness to honor myself and love myself is laid low by the expiation of Christ, where my willingness to compromise with evil is slayed, where my self-centered exclusive preoccupations are revealed as they are. For the cross reveals two glorious and weighty truths: I am a great sinner, and Christ is a greater savior. That the Almighty God would, for no other cause than the love which is in his nature, deign to die my death, obliterates my foolish obsession with my own pitiful desires. At the cross I behold the weightiness of my sin: it is so great that the only way that I would be redeemed is if the perfect, holy, eternal Son of God would pay it down for me. At the cross I behold the weightiness of God's love: it is so great that He willingly and unprovoked DID send the perfect, holy, eternal Son of God to redeem me through His blood. This is the glory of God and my hope of glory: Christ Jesus, my Savior.