“The Truth Shall Set You Free”

I heard this phrase in Scripture used a lot, even by the wicked in a sarcastic way. It’s been used often by Christians to mean that when you confess your sin to the Lord (repent) that you are set free, but confessing your sin is only the first half of what it means to be free. When I confess my sin to God I have His peace of being forgiven. When I ask someone to forgive me for the sin I committed against him/her I have peace with that person. In either case, I am not yet “free” in the sense of true freedom until I overcome that which caused me to sin against God or someone else in the first place. My thinking needs to change because how I think dictates how I behave and act out.

John the Baptist told God’s leaders (those who came to see John baptizing in the river) to “produce fruit in keeping with repentance;” (Matthew 3:8) for as it was in Jesus’ day the leaders of His people were not producing the fruit that comes out of humility and obedience to God, and they were hindering people from entering the kingdom of God by their teaching and example. God expects fruit to come out of our repentance. There are works that are to accompany our salvation: good fruit to the glory of God.

Repentance is the first step, and then we seek after the righteousness of Christ so that we will mature in righteousness – becoming the true sons and daughters of God. The world needs to see God’s favor and blessings on those who do His will; for some to turn to the Lord as well in repentance and faithfulness.

So the question comes: How do I keep from committing the same offense or sin again? God does not forgive our sin/sins so that we can think and live the same old ways, but so that we will seek wisdom and truth and learn to live accordingly. This is true freedom. Freedom is not living for yourself, to seek after what pleases you only at the expense or the neglect of others, especially at the expense and neglect of your spouse and children. God does not give us the freedom (right) to live selfish and prideful lifestyles, nor to violate the personal God-given rights of others.

Freedom does not come by way of that which is false, deceptive or inconsiderate. Freedom comes by way of truth, God’s truth. God’s truth is full of God’s wisdom and love. God the Father sent His Son to show us this and Jesus spent 3 years with His disciples teaching them how to think and live and carry on after He was gone. Jesus Christ was FREE in every sense of the true meaning of FREEDOM. In fact He claimed: “I am the truth, the way and the life and no one comes to the Father except by ME.”

Today we hear so many different teachings, but there is only ONE truth because there is only ONE God. God created everything and set both physical and spiritual laws for mankind to eternally thrive by. When we seek after knowledge we first need the “foundation” of all knowledge established in us, otherwise all that we build in our lives will not hold up; in the end it will be all be destroyed and never remembered. This “foundation” of all knowledge is “truth,” God’s truth. Jesus taught that if a man (and his wife) builds his house on a foundation of sand the house will not stand in a storm, but if he builds his house on the Rock of truth and faith that ‘wise’ man’s house will stand up in any storm of life. (Matthew 7:24-26)

Truth is who God is and who you are to God; what God has planned since the beginning of Creation. Truth is what God calls right and wrong/good and evil because God will judge the world, every single human being that has ever been born will one day stand before God to give an account of his/her life, no matter how short or long that life was on earth. Truth is what God, in His infinite wisdom, has established in the universe and with the earth - for mankind to eternally thrive by. Truth is what God says He will do or not do. Truth is what God has firmly set for every person, every family and every nation as commandments/rules/laws, both of physical and spiritual nature. Now hear this:

*“The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day of the Lord there will be ONE Lord, and His Name the ONLY Name…..If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, they will have no rain.”* Zechariah 14:9 and 17

Freedom is not doing your own thing. Freedom is not complete with simply knowing the truth; we must also live it out obediently to God. If we love God – we will obey God. If we obey God – we show that we love God and our fellow man. We are to mature in righteousness if we are to be truly “free” people.

*“Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with* ***the truth*** *that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in* ***true righteousness and holiness****.”* Ephesians 4:21-24

In God’s Book – there is no excuse for ignorance (not knowing the truth) when He has so graciously given us all we need to live as His true sons and daughters. He has given us His Truth, His Love in His Son, His Name, His indwelling Holy Spirit, His Laws and Justice, His Promises, His Favor and His Kingdom eternal. God has even given us the right to choose, and with each choice we make whether good or bad – there is an end result that God set in the beginning because He is the Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end; the Holy One. He is our Father!

Jesus told us how to be free when He said, *“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.* *I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. My language is not clear to you because you are unable to hear Me. Why? You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out his desire instead of mine. Your father, the devil, was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”* John 8:31-37, 43-47

Hearing what God says is possible only by God’s indwelling Spirit. This is why the world speaks and teaches that which is contrary to the truth, even believing that what they hear from their teachers, parents and leaders – is the truth. Once God brings His truth to you – you are then responsible before God with that truth. Whatever decision you make about it has consequences. The most important truth and decision you will ever make in your life is what you decide to do with the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Making the right decisions about who Jesus is to you – sets you free from going down that road that leads to destruction and that ultimately drops you off in Hell forever.

Our decisions are good ones if they are by “faith” in “the truth” of God. Our decisions are bad ones if they are by “fear” in “the lies” of the devil. The truths of God are everywhere to be seen and heard; God cares more than we do that we know the truth so that we can live the life that is truly life. Jesus said,

*“I'll give you the words and wisdom that will reduce all your accusers to stammers and stutters; I will give you the right words and such wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to reply or refute you!”* Luke 21:15

Today what we have all around us is a war of words. Words! Words! Words! But where is the TRUTH to be found - if not with God’s holy people; people of truth and godly faithfulness that hold out the *word of life* in a crooked and depraved generation? (Philippians 2:15-17)

The first apostles of Jesus Christ sat under His direct teaching of which they wrote down by the inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit – for generations to come – until He comes again to finish all that is written about the future. One of the first apostles that daily walked with Jesus - was John who wrote the gospel of John, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John and the book of Revelation. He faithfully teaches us:

*“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched — this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared;* ***we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you*** *the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you* ***what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us****. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.*

*“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet* ***walk in the darkness****, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we* ***walk in the light****, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

*“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and* ***his word*** *has no place* ***in our lives****.”* 1 John chapter 1

So, as you can see there is a lot more to being “free” than simply confessing our sin/sins and going on in the same old ways.

*“This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life….”* Deuteronomy 30:19-20

This is “the truth” that sets you free!