

## Set Free!!!!

Psalm 119:32,45

Have you ever read the warning labels on products before? A warning label on a snow sled says, "Beware: sled may develop high speed under certain conditions."

I wonder if that was written for people who live in Florida who have never seen snow. Growing up, my friends and I looked for those "certain snow conditions."

A warning on a package of fishing lures reads: Harmful if swallowed!! I could just see a fisherman in a boat fishing all day and is very hungry, looking at the lures and saying, "Man I gotta have one of those, but those darn hooks are in the way."

A carpenter's router carries this warning: This product is not intended for use as a dental drill!! Really!! I wonder if Sears has had problems with dentists trying to cut corners and save money on instruments.

Cardboard sunshields used to keep the hot sun off your dashboard has a warning that says, "Do not drive with sunshield in place." Really!!!!

- Life is full of warnings. It seems that there is always someone telling us what we can't do. Some think this is the essence of Christianity. God sets up in heaven on his throne issuing rules like a lawyer saying, "Don't do this, don't do that, and don't you dare have any fun!!"
- Religion for many becomes drudgery instead of freedom. See, God is all about freedom. Only with Him can we experience REAL FREEDOM!!
  - Read Psalms 119:32,45
- These two statements connect freedom and the Word. Both verses say freedom and the Word go hand in hand.

- Often our culture is defined by being loosed from the shackles of religion. But is freedom from God and the Word really freedom? No! It is really slavery. Look at John 8:31-38.
- Lets look this morning at some of the forms of slavery the Pharisees were bound up in.
- First is the slavery of sin. AS MUCH AS WE TRY TO BLANK OUT THE GUILT OF SINFUL DISOBEDIENCE, WE ARE NOT REALLY ACTING FREELY!! When we stop obeying God, we become a slave to the devil. Have you ever tried to stop sinning? If you have, you know you are not truly free.
  - Another slavery is religious arrogance. Lets look at Luke 18:10-14. Unfortunately we identify with the Pharisee all too often. We judge others. We are certain that we are closer to God than other people are. We are really slaves!!
- We are slaves to tradition. Have you examined what you really believe and how you practice your faith? Boy, I'm meddling now. If you compare your life and beliefs, you can see a discrepancy with scripture. Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference because we are so married to our religious traditions. The Pharisees continually conflicted with Jesus over their religious traditions. Guess what? Tradition won out every time over Gods authoritative Word.
- Christians can also be enslaved by their fear of man. Proverbs 29:25 says, "Fear of man can prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe."
  - We are so desperate for approval we will do all kinds of things just to please others.
- SO HOW CAN WE BE FREE!! THAT IS THE QUESTION BEFORE US TODAY!!

- Freedom is found in careful obedience to God's Word. Psalms 119:45 says, "I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts." It may sound strange but submission to God sets us free!!!
  - IT warns us of the destructive things that threaten to enslave us.  
Illustration: Park ranger turned off his radio.
- Did you know there is power in the Spirit inspired Word of God! It will release you from the slavery of sin, tradition, and the need to please others. Jesus 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."
- The way to true freedom is to submit willingly to the Word of God. This means letting the teachings of Jesus seep deep down into our hearts and minds until we are transformed by it.
  - Maybe you don't feel free today. Would you like to be free today?
- Over a century ago our nation was embroiled in civil war. A primary issue was the slavery of people from Africa. One September day, president Lincoln issued an executive order. He wrote..."That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, all persons held as slaves within any state or designated part of a state, the people where of shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thence forward, and forever free: and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or actions to repress such person, or any of them, in any efforts they make for their actual freedom. Signed Abraham Lincoln
- Suddenly thousands of people were declared free by the government of the United States

- One more powerful than that or any president has made a greater proclamation of freedom. It is contained in His word. This is our proclamation: Galatians 5:1....It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yolk of slavery.