

Jesus comes into this room, the locked doors can't stop him. Jesus comes to his friends, and his first words are; 'Peace'. 'Peace be with you.'

Maybe that's why it is good at the start of each service that we pass the peace; because in Jesus fear no longer rules our lives. Who rules our lives? The one we don't fear, because he gave his life for us. He is the one who stand with us behind those closed doors so that we might live as his free people. Have you ever wondered why some people don't like passing the peace?

Good News, in Jesus we are not a people of fear; we have a new nature. We have been recreated in Jesus' image; and fear doesn't describe him, fear doesn't control him or shape him. You have

been recreated in Jesus' image; a child of Father, whom he loves and brings him great joy. In Jesus that's who you are; that is your new nature.

Live free!

Let us pray.

Jesus thank you for the freedom we have in you. The freedom to live and grow as Father's children. The freedom to confidently come to him. The freedom to share with him about anything with the confident expectation that he is listening and acting.

Jesus reveal any area in my life that is threatening this freedom for my greatest desire is to live and grow in the relationship you have created through your death and resurrection. Jesus reveal anything that isn't from you, for I want to be living in the freedom your truth brings. I want to be living openly and honestly with you, growing to be more and more like you. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

23 April 2017

A SCANDALOUS FREEDOM

Beautiful Outlaw



Freedom! The first thought that comes into my mind when I hear 'Freedom' is being able to do whatever you like. Eat as much ice cream as you like. Having the money to do whatever you like, without any restrictions; travel, buy a new toy, retire early. I've got the freedom to do whatever I like.

How is this idea of freedom any different to being selfish?

Selfishness is taking whatever I want, whenever I want. Is selfishness freedom?

Let's reflect again on Jesus' prayer on the eve of his crucifixion. On arriving at the olive grove called Gethsemane Jesus takes Peter, James and John with him; 'and he became anguished and distressed. (Does that sound like freedom?)

Jesus told them, 'My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. (Does that sound like freedom!) Stay here and keep watch with me.' He went a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground praying, 'My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.'" (Matthew 26:36-39)

Where is Jesus' freedom; being able to do whatever he wants to satisfy himself, or knowing he can trust his father in every and any situation?

How well does Jesus know Father?

They have an amazing relationship. What amazing intimacy. What amazing trust. There is no hiding from each other. They are

there for each other. They have an open, honest, loving relationship. They share deeply from their heart and soul. How well does Jesus know Father? Completely!

Here is Jesus' freedom. It comes from this relationship. That's why Jesus' freedom doesn't end in selfishness. Just doing whatever you want, whenever you want, when you're the focus is selfishness.

And in the end selfishness is the greatest slavery!

Jesus freedom doesn't come from him not caring what other people think. Jesus does care what other people think, because Jesus cares deeply for people. He's just not controlled by them. His actions aren't shaped by what other people think.

Jesus freedom comes from knowing what his Father thinks.

What does Father think about Jesus?

At Jesus' baptism we hear what Father thinks from his very own mouth; "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy." (Matt. 3:17) And Father repeats the same thought on the Mount of Transfiguration; "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him." (Matt. 17:5)

Did you notice Father's invitation to freedom at the end of what he said; 'Listen to him'.

Father doesn't point us to self-indulgence, doing whatever I want whenever I want. No, I think that's what we're told winning Lotto will do for you.

Father invites us to 'Listen to Jesus'. Do you notice that Father is inviting you into a relationship? A

relationship of trust? There is no freedom without trust; lies leave you trapped, destroyed, disappointed, frustrated. Lies never produce freedom.

According to Jesus it is the truth that sets people free. "Jesus said to the people who believed in him, 'You are truly my disciples if

How is freedom different to selfishness?

you remain faithful to my teaching. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31) Of course later in the Gospel of John Jesus says; "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) Notice that truth is not a concept but a person whom we trust. Jesus is the truth, he is the person we trust with our lives.

It is in this relationship that we come to know

Father, come to know Father as his children. Children who have free access to our Father. What freedom we have in Jesus. We are free to approach God as our Dad; knowing his love for us. Fear is replaced with trust. Hiding is replaced with being open and honest.

It is because of this wonderful relationship we have in Jesus that Paul writes: "Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now

come boldly and confidently into God's presence." (Ephesians 3:14) This is the freedom we have. We can come into Father's presence without fear, but confident that our Dad will do what is best. Confident that we can share anything with him from the heart, for we are on his heart.

Does this mean we can do anything we want? Or is that selfishness?

Paul later in his letter writes; "With the Lord's authority I say

this: Live no longer as Gentiles do (that's those running around controlled by fear and selfishness). Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him... Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God – truly righteous and holy." (Eph 4:17,23) (that's a life lived up close and personal with God as Dad; listening to Jesus out of trust because you know he doesn't lie but speaks the truth. And the truth, remember, sets you free.)

Then Paul reminds his readers how to live this new freedom; "Stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbours the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still

angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to

In Jesus, we are free to approach God as our Dad.

those who hear them." (Eph. 4:25-30) Paul brings this to a conclusion, not by generating fear, but by encouraging us to live true to who we are. Remember the truth does what? And who is the truth?

"Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. (In Jesus that is who are you?) Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered

himself as a sacrifice for us..." (Eph 5:1,2) What beautiful freedom we have in Jesus, that we can live and grow as God's children. Not doing whatever we want; that could destroy us, just look at Adam and Eve. But we are free to do what Dad wants, what's on his heart, and grow to be more and more like Jesus.

In today's gospel reading we have an example of the freedom that Jesus creates. Where do we find the disciples at the beginning of the story? Behind locked doors. Now that's the opposite of freedom.

Why are they behind these locked doors? Fear! What caused Adam and Eve to hide when they heard God? Fear! Being fearful cripples and destroys life. Why do people put on a front when you first meet them? Fear! Our sinful nature is fearful; it leaves us trapped, not free.