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From the Pastor



Freedom

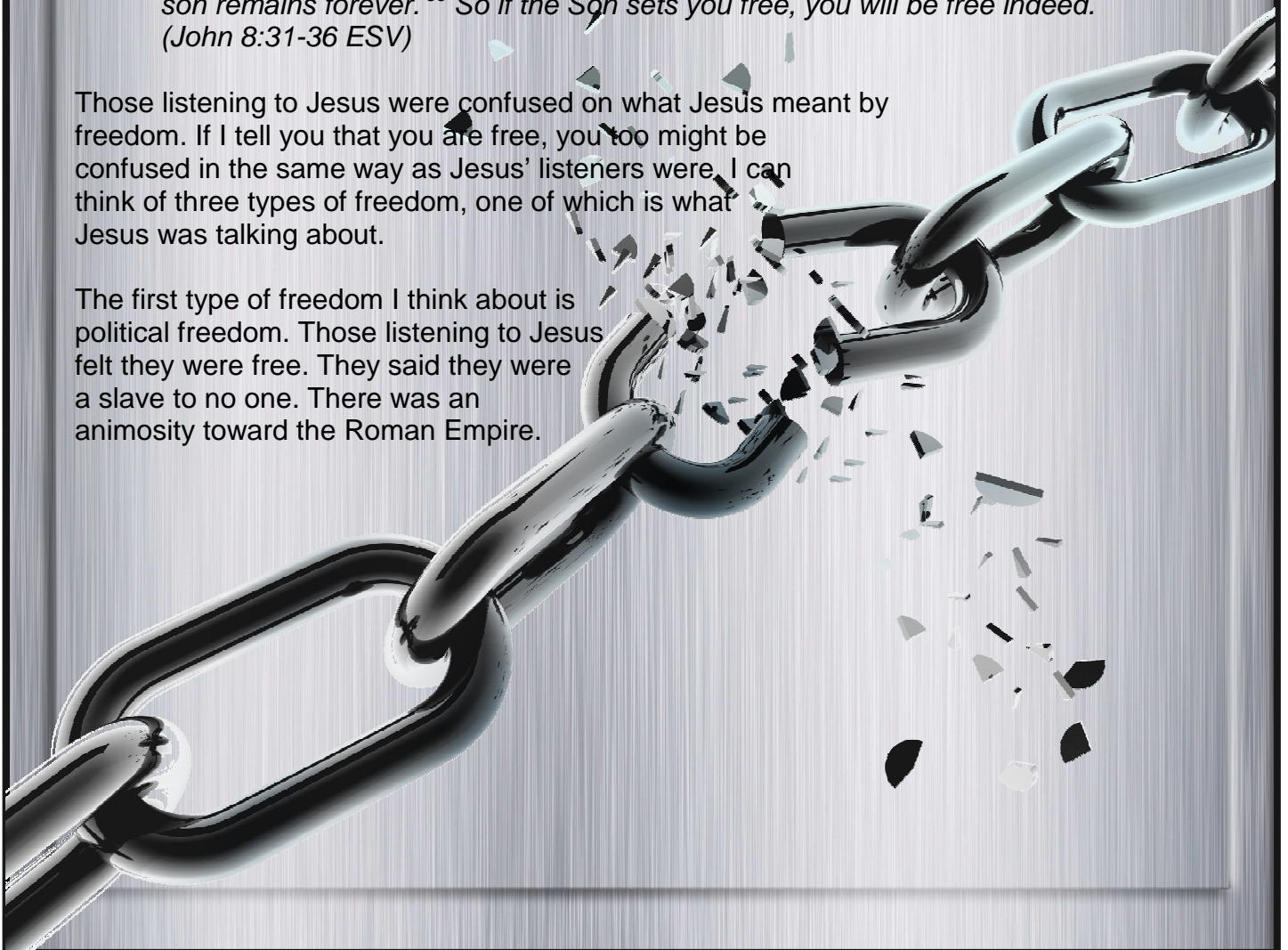
In the first century Jesus was sitting with some of the Jews who believed in Him, and He was telling them that they were free. In the same way you too are free. Look at what Jesus said:

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."³³ They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:31-36 ESV)

Those listening to Jesus were confused on what Jesus meant by freedom. If I tell you that you are free, you too might be confused in the same way as Jesus' listeners were. I can think of three types of freedom, one of which is what Jesus was talking about.

The first type of freedom I think about is political freedom. Those listening to Jesus felt they were free. They said they were a slave to no one. There was an animosity toward the Roman Empire.



*Judea came under direct Roman administration. Growing anger against increased Roman suppression of Jewish life resulted in sporadic violence which escalated into a full-scale revolt in 66 [AD].*¹

Therefore, when Jesus said to these Jewish believers that they were free, some may have thought, "Of course we are free, we would never allow us to be slaves of Rome." You and I may feel we are a free nation. We would never consider being slaves to anyone. However, Jesus was not talking about political freedom.

The second type of freedom I think of is religious freedom. As the Jews were listening to Jesus, it seems they were also thinking of religious freedom. They responded to Jesus by saying, "Of course we're free, we are children of Abraham, free to worship as God has commanded." We think that since we are in America, we are free to worship any way we want. This may be true, but this is not the freedom Jesus was talking about.

There is a third type of freedom I think of when I hear Jesus speaking of freedom. I believe this is the type of freedom Jesus meant, spiritual freedom. After the Jews responded to Jesus, Jesus replied back with the words, "...*everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.*" There is a slavery we are part of, and that is the slavery to sin. Look at what the Bible says about our sin.

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23 ESV)

There is no one who can live a perfect life, following all that God commands. Those listening to Jesus did not realize the freedom Jesus was giving them. It is only through the power of Jesus that we can break free from the chains of sin. It is Jesus who sets us free from sin.

Does this mean believers will no longer sin? Of course not. However, we are free from the power of sin. We no longer have to sin, but we don't believe it. We forget Jesus has empowered us to be free from sin. Our freedom comes from a daily surrender of our flesh to the Holy Spirit and allowing God to free us. If you want to experience freedom, allow the *Son to set you free, and you will be free indeed!*

In Him and for His Glory,



¹Ancient Jewish History: Roman Rule (63 BCE - 313 CE), Jewish Virtual Library, at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Romans.html>, accessed 6/20/16.