

Freedom – an Invitation to Adventure with Jesus

(2 Corinthians 3:17)

- **Just Show Up**

- I've heard it said, "90% of success is just showing up." I think there's truth in that. Sometimes, I don't *feel* like showing up—I'm afraid, I'm tired, I'm uncertain, and I'd rather not—but when I just show up as I am, God always comes through. Can you relate? At the end of this, I'm going to give an invitation to join me on a journey this summer. Some of you will feel called to this, but you might not "feel like it," you might be unsure, afraid—just show up. Show up, and let God do the rest.

- **Freedom**

- This past Thursday was the National Day of Prayer, and their theme verse was 2 Cor. 3:17 "17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."
 - We *love* the word "Freedom," it's powerful. It's defined our nation, we've sacrificed and fought for it. "Freedom" is an even more important word in the Church, in God's Story: it's all over the Bible.
- Recurring themes in the Bible, "Hyperlinks" in the New Testament: *Freedom & Free*
- **Romans 6:19-23** "19 I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. 20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- **Romans 8:18-21** "18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God."
- **Galatians 3:28** "28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
- **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 a yoke of slavery."
- **Galatians 5:13** "13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love."
- **James 1:25** "25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do."
- **1 Peter 2:16** "16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves."
- **John 8:34-36** "34 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."
- Jesus launched into his ministry by quoting **from Isaiah 61**: "*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners...*"
- Back to our key verse, let's look at the context of that verse:
 - **2 Corinthians 3:12-18** "12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. 14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. 15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."
- Israel's challenge: they had been set free, *but they needed to learn how to live free.*

- You trust Jesus? You've repented of the old way and you believe? *You've been set free! Are you living free?*
- We're called to go into all the world and be witnesses of the Good News: but we don't just need to send people out and do the mission—we *need changed people. We need changed people to go out and change people.*
- How does that happen? *"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."* We need the Church to wake up and *be the church.* We need the people who've been set free to live free. We need changed people to go out and change people.
- How do we get there? *Prayer.* Every great move of God in history, every great revival we talk about today, as far as I can tell, *has been preceded by Prayer.*
- Do you want to be set free? Do you want to live free? Do you want to see a new move of God to awaken his church to be transformed and bring his transformation to the world: to change hearts and lives, to change society, to bring healing and justice and righteousness, to spread holiness throughout the land? PRAY.
- **DiscipleMakers: An Invitation to Adventure with Jesus**
 - We have a Mission, from Jesus himself. We know what it says (hopefully). We know how to talk about it. We know how to study it, maybe even preach on it from time to time. When are we actually going to go and *do it?* Maybe one of the biggest ways we get stuck in our journey with God is spending so much time sitting around, listening, learning, discussing (all good things), but never actually *doing* things that stretch us. Never letting ourselves be in situations where we're helpless unless God shows up. *But those are exactly the times we see God show up.*
 - What if God is calling *you* to step into that frontier, into that adventure of partnering with his mission? What if you are one of those Jesus is looking at, saying, *"Follow me"*? What if you started to say yes to that burning desire, buried deep in your heart, for *more?* Could it be *you* God is calling, for such a time as this?
 - We have a Mission. It won't be accomplished if our life together as a church is only coming together to hear a few gifted people offer some songs and sermons once a week, then go home. It will only happen if we allow the Body of Christ to be activated and equipped for all the unique ways he is calling us to serve his mission: Disciples of Jesus, growing deeper with God, discipling others, and going out to make *new* disciples. Mission. Multiplication. Transformation. Seeking God's Kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. Is he calling you? You don't have to have it all figured out. You just have to say yes. Join us this summer and find out.
 - *DiscipleMakers 2021: a four-month leadership journey for Discipleship & Mission.*
 - You may or may not be called this year to join this group, *but all of us have a part to play:* I want to call upon all of us to *pray* that God would raise up "laborers for the harvest," people who share a burden for making disciples in the church and outside the church. Pray for God to provide and ask if God is calling *you.*
 - Is fear holding us back? At the age of 38, Martin Luther King Jr. gave a message titled, "But If Not." Here's part of what he said:
 - *"I say to you, this morning, that if you have never found something so dear and precious to you that you will die for it, then you aren't fit to live. You may be 38 years old, as I happen to be, and one day, some great opportunity stands before you and calls upon you to stand for some great principle, some great issue, some great cause. And you refuse to do it because you are afraid. You refuse to do it because you want to live longer. You're afraid that you will lose your job, or you are afraid that you will be criticized or that you will lose your popularity, or you're afraid that somebody will stab or shoot or bomb your house. So you refuse to take a stand. Well, you may go on and live until you are ninety, but you are just as dead at 38 as you would be at ninety. And the cessation of breathing in your life is but the belated announcement of an earlier death of the spirit. You died when you refused to stand up for right. You died when you refused to stand up for truth. You died when you refused to stand up for justice."*
 - Pray that God will raise up disciple makers for his mission. Pray that God will reveal if it's you. Step out of fear, into to faith, to watch God's mission unfold.