

## Bible Study Guide for the Week of October 24- 30

1. Read through the gospel reading
2. Read the notes and comments
3. Read and answer the questions at the end by yourself or with other people

### John 8: 31-36

31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” 33 They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free?’” 34 Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. 35 The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. 36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

**33 They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free?’”**

Over the course of time, the Jewish people have found themselves under the rule of, or enslaved, by the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and arguably the Romans. It’s interesting what the Israelites say here in that they don’t believe they are enslaved, or have been, by anyone. Even in today’s modern times, we can find ourselves in the Israelites shoes. For example, I know I am under the control of technology. I can’t go anywhere without my phone or needing my laptop. Another personal example is how I am a slave to my daily coffee. That being said, I think we all end up a slave of something else. Yet here is a wonderful reminder to us that we are freed children of God, and how a relationship with Christ means we recognize and remember the gift given to us by always turning to Christ.

**34 Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.**

When I read this text, I immediately think about what sin is, what it means to me, and what Jesus is asking of me (and you) in this verse. I have heard sin be described as something displeasing in God’s eyes and failing to recognize Jesus. In remembering our Reformation leaders and fathers of the Lutheran church and theology they name sin as the self-centered failure to trust God (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article II). Knowing this, it becomes clearer what Jesus is saying to us that we have sinned against God in thought word in deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone, we have not loved God with our whole hearts, we have not treated our neighbors as ourselves.

**35 The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. 36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.**

The language here is quite powerful. Try reading it in a group one by one. See if you can hear Jesus inviting us (and all others, including the Israelites here in the story) to continue to follow in Jesus’ example of ministry and into relationship with God. Even when we are controlled by our sins. Even if day after day, we are continuously captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. Jesus calls me and you, yes, YOU, to know you can always turn to God and be given his grace and mercy. Jesus calls for me and you and ALL that through our baptismal waters and through Holy

Communion, we are free to turn from sin and embrace the love that is freely given to us by Christ. We aren't free from everything nor are we free to do "whatever we want", but we are free to reform (pun intended) our sinful ways and follow Christ into relationship with God and one another.

### **Discussion Questions**

- 1. How many times have you caught yourself constantly under your boss' thumb, being controlled by what you can do for a church offering based on the savings in your account, or being chained to something besides God? How can we live our lives based on what the gospel reading tells us?**
- 2. What is your definition of sin? Do you think Jesus uses this gospel to say what sin is? What invitation is extended to the Israelites and to us?**
- 3. Can you name a time where you were reformed by turning from sin and accepting Jesus invitation to turn to God? How can you accept Jesus invitation to live out being a freed child of God every day?**