

May 13, 2020, Rev. Alex Barton, Church of the Redeemer Lorain

John 8:31-38

**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. **37** I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word. **38** I declare what I have seen in the Father’s presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father.”

It appears the teaching of this morning from Jesus is clear. True disciples know the truth and the truth makes them free. Yet, most of us know when the words truth and freedom are thrown about it is never as clear as we would like. Questions often come up that seem impossible to answer or lead to clarification upon clarification. Whose truth? Who told you that was the truth? I don’t feel unfree so what am I being freed from? That doesn’t sound like freedom? The list could go on. The question put to Jesus is that the people have never been slaves so what do you mean by being made free? His response is clear and seemingly universal. It is sin that takes away our freedom.

My school growing up had “the truth will make you free,” as its motto. We would always joke that the truth didn’t make you free but get you in trouble. The funny thing is as an adult the statement is still true but in a totally different way. Where once I would get detention and sent to the principle now the truth can be uncomfortable to those around me. Sometimes the call for truth and freedom makes people annoyed if not mad. The responses ‘this is how we have always done it’ or ‘I am not going to ever change’ or ‘whats the point it will always be the same’ come to mind. Ultimately freedom is a beautiful and good goal but the path to it can be hard.

The good news in this passage is that freedom ultimately comes from God not simply our own actions. And, while it is true that we have the power to ‘commit sin’ we also have the power to respond to God’s offer of ‘freedom.’ And what about now when the truth seems very hard to come by? When the biases of the various sources we get our information from seems questionable? We may not ever get to have all the answers but some truth has been handed down to us from the very first disciples about how to live together and love one another. It moments like these its good to remember that the call of the disciples in the beatitudes and works of mercy and in prayer are still vital. I hope each of you can find glimmers of the truth handed down to us in this moment of anxiety and fear. I hope that each of you can feel the freedom God has given us to be loving people and the strength to do so when it feels hardest. The truth does indeed make us free.

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