



Freedom

Denise

Hi and welcome to the Black and White Podcast where we speak radical grace, raw truth and real hope in a gray world. I'm your host Denise Pass with my, hmm what shall I say, adventurous cohost Micah Maddox (laughing) and this week we are talking about freedom. How do you like that introduction Micah?

Micah

Woo! Adventurous. I'm ready for some freedom (excitement, laughing).

Denise

Well this has been quite an adventure during this podcast, hasn't it?

Micah

It has. It's been great.

Denise

This month I'm really looking forward to talking about freedom. I feel like I should say it like Mel Gibson did in "Braveheart" you guys ready for this? Freedom (*Denise yells it and lots of laughing*).

Micah

Never a dull moment with Denise. (more laughing)

Denise

Well today we thought it would be meaningful and fun to discuss what freedom means to us in celebration of July 4th. The scripture for this episode is from Galatians 5:1 New Living Translation. So, Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure you stay free and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law. This version really spells out well the dynamics of freedom. Christ has given us true freedom. It was not something we earned on our own, but we have a choice and whether or not we maintain that freedom. Freedom has to be protected.

Micah

Wow! I love that freedom has to be protected. You know, it's not something that can just be left to the side or tossed around or not thought about. It has to be protected. It's something that we can have, but there is some stewarding that has to be done with our freedom, right? What does freedom mean to you Denise?

Denise

Well, you know even as you were just saying, freedom has to be protected, I think about how thankful I am for those who have served our country to give us freedom we experience here in our country, but freedom is such a multi-dimensional word. The first thing that comes to mind for me is the freedom Christ gives us. It's freedom from sin. Freedom to recognize sin in our lives and be set free from it. It doesn't mean that we will never sin, but we can be liberated to rise above sin and repent and turn from it.

Micah

It's so good, you know. I've heard the phrase, I'm not sure who said it first, but "Freedom isn't free". Freedom is never free. If you are talking about our spiritual freedom, there's the blood of Jesus. If we're talking about freedom in our country, there's the blood of our fellow Americans who went to the enemy lines and risked their lives for us. So, this idea, this thought, this thing of freedom it's so valuable, it's not free, it's not something light, it's not something that comes easy. It comes through Jesus with a lot of grace and a lot of mercy but shed blood and pain and suffering.

Denise

Sacrifice.

Micah

Yea sacrifice. What a word, wow!

Denise

Well you know, another word I think of that is a definition or aspect of freedom is rights. We often associate freedoms with rights and "Webster" defines it, I looked this up, as the power or right to act, speak or think as one wants without hinderance or restraint. You know, rights are usually fought for to obtain, but the negative side of rights is when people feel entitled to rights.

Micah

Ooh! We live in an entitled culture, don't we? Everyone feels like they are entitled and with the social media we have and the freedom of speech that we have, people feel entitled to just share and to do and to live however they desire and however they want. It's a scary thing because everyone desires to be free, but then people take advantage of their freedom.

Denise

Yes.

Micah

Right?

Denise

Yes. They forget the sacrifice I think.

Micah

Yes.

Denise

I say they. (laughing) Of course It's not going to be us.

Micah

All of us, we all do. We all want to be free. We all want more freedom. We all, we don't want to, but we do, judge others when they abuse their freedom.

Denise

Yes.

Micah

Right? Or when they walk outside the lines of their freedom or cross the line, yet when we do it we justify it.

Denise

(Yells) That's freedom! (laughing)

Micah

Right? It's a hard cycle of sin. (repeats). Another thing that I think of with freedom is the opposite of freedom which would be enslaved or in prison, being in bondage right? Where there's this crazy fork in the road. It's either I'm going to be free or I'm going to be bound. I really believe Denise that we have a choice in every area of our life we have a choice to either be free or to be bound.

Denise

Yes. Imprisonment really happens in the mind.

Micah

Yeah, true.

Denise

It is not just an act of governing authorities where they free people. Freedom begins in our minds. We can be captivated by vain philosophies of this world and not even recognize it. We can buy into humanism or even limiting beliefs about ourselves and not even taste the freedom that Christ has for us.

Micah

Wow! Not taste that freedom Christ has for us. It's so true. Even, I believe, even as Christians, we can buy into being bound or enslaved and not even realize that we are completely being drawn away. Like the Bible talks about being drawn away with your own lusts. It's not until we feel like an outsider looking in to the Christian faith that we realize where our true freedom comes from, and that is from the Spirit. The Bible is clear in Romans 8:2, it says "because you belong to Him" Jesus, "the power of the life giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death". Such power in this verse that we have freedom, It's clear, through the Spirit, nothing else. It's not our own way out of bondage. We try to get our own way out, we try to kick down the door or break the chains. There's nothing that can break the chains of bondage except for the Spirit of God.

Denise

Amen! It's resting in Him, He gives us freedom. Once again, it comes from within, the battle takes place in our minds for freedom. The reason why we get enslaved is because we are deceived. The enemy is cunning, and we forget who we are who's we are. Now one says, "You Know Micah, gee I think I'll go be enslaved now." (laughing). Most of the time it happens by degrees and it's something we don't even see.

Micah

I think your right. I know I have found myself in the chains of legalism before and I never even realized it. I truly believed that some of the loyalties to men, to Christian leaders and to rules that I held was my sincere devotion to God. I firmly believed that at that time in that time in my life, but God had to strip away people and religious boundaries in my life to make me see that true freedom had nothing to do with the rules of man, northing to do with religious practices and nothing to do with church politics. True freedom had and has everything to do with me living my life completely devoted to Jesus and following His leading alone. Not mans, not man's rules, not man's religious practices, not a church's opinion, not an organization's guidelines, but true freedom for me comes when my heart is completely devoted to Jesus and I am following Him alone.

Denise

That is beautiful. I think a lot of times the world looks at Christians and they mock the freedom we have because freedom is actually being obedient and submitting to God. That doesn't look like freedom to people because freedom can sometimes look more like I get my way. That's not true freedom, but really being submitted to His lordship that's freedom. You know, for me, the fear of man had me enslaved. I felt like I never measured up. Timidity confined me, and I think that's where the Lord gave me the word

authority this year. I keep coming back to who I am in Christ and He has set me free from the fear of man and from shame this year for writing “Shame Off You”. (laughing).

Micah

I know, I can't wait to get your book. As I listened to you talk, I was thinking about the verse in Proverbs, it says, “the fear of man brings a snare.” It captures, it captivates, but we know true freedom comes from the Spirit. The Bible is so clear and yet over and over and over we allow man to capture our thoughts, capture our mind and capture our desires so that we are drawn away. It's crazy.

Denise

You know, there is a fear that is good though and it's out of Proverbs 1:7, “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and lot of people don't understand that either. What do you mean, be afraid of God! But there is a reverence and an awe of Him that enables us to have and walk in true freedom. So, while we are celebrating the freedoms we have in Christ, in celebration of Independence Day, I am also grateful for the religious freedoms we have in this country and the many freedoms we enjoy. What is one of your favorite freedoms that we have in this country, Micah?

Micah

You know, every Sunday I drive my kids to church and on our way there we pray. Part of the reason for that is to keep it calm in the car otherwise if we are not praying we are fighting, you know, we're real (laughing).

Denise

So, your using prayer! (laughing).

Micah

Yeah, we use that prayer every Sunday and sometimes other times to, I'll just turn the radio off and say, “Okay, let's pray, no more talking, let's pray.” We pray and our specific prayer on Sunday's is a thanksgiving prayer to God that we can come together and worship together with other believer's. To me, it's so amazing that we can join together with heart's united, we can clasp hands, we can raise our hands and we can worship our mighty God with other believer's. I'm just so thankful for our freedom because I know that not everywhere in the world has the freedom to worship God like we do.

Denise

The right to assemble. It's a freedom we may not have one day.

Micah

Yeah, that's right.

Denise

That's scary to think about and such a precious freedom that we take for granted and makes me think about that other scripture where it talks about don't forsake the gathering of the saints.

Micah

Yes!

Denise

It is such an incredible privilege. Romans 6:1 says “What shall we say then, are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?” I think sometimes we can use our freedom for sin. We see it in the news. People fight for a right that is unbiblical and think they are free to exercise that right. The freedom God gives is not like that, true freedom would not be enslaved to sin. I am going to recap some real quick because I don’t think I did a good enough segue. After I say it’s a precious freedom, you know what breaks my heart, Micah? It is when we have this freedom given to us we would use it for sin instead.

Micah

Wow! Yeah.

Denise

Romans 6:1 says, “What shall we say then, are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?” We see it in the news, people fight for a right that is unbiblical and think they are free to exercise that right, but the freedom God gives is not like that. True freedom would not be enslaved to sin.

Micah

That’s right. I love that scripture that you said what shall we say to continue in sin that grace may abound. The very next verse begins with God forbid. That’s not the way God would have it, that we would continue in sin that His grace would be poured out and poured out. Now, God does offer the grace, right? He is a merciful and loving God who His grace is never ending in Psalms over and over and over it says His love is everlasting. It’s always going to be pouring out. It’s such a gift to know that we can live in the freedom of the Spirit of God and that we can be unified as believers knowing that Jesus covers all of our sins and that’s to His death, His burial, His resurrection that sacrifice that He offers. So, today we want to thank God and praise Him for the freedom we have through Jesus and we want to thank God for the freedom we have in this country.

Denise

Amen!

Micah

We know that it’s a gift and we want to thank those who serve in our armed forces and in our government and everyone who has a part all of the citizens, Right? Who have a part in making this country what it is and you know, sometimes there’s a lot of bickering and fighting amongst our country and the news can really portray our country a negative place and with a negative mindset. But, if you go out on the streets and you begin to talk to people, I see something beautiful. I see people join together and I love that we can live in a country where we can go outside our house and not be afraid to worship and we can live free. So, thank you to the amazing citizens of our country, our county and right here in Fredericksburg.

Denise

And to our soldiers who bravely sacrificed for us.

Micah

And for those who have gone on before and you know, I love having Washington right here near us. The tomb of the unknown soldier, I don't know if you have been there recently

Denise

Yes!

Micah

But what a powerful place to be. Just to remember and to realize the sacrifice.

Denise

Yes! So Christlike.

Micah

Right! What a picture, what a picture of Jesus. You can't help, I can't help but go there and watch the soldiers march so majestically in front of that tomb there and then think of our Savior. I know that obviously that's not a place for Him, right?

Denise

Right.

Micah

But to me, it's just a picture of that and it makes me think in awe and in reverence. As much reverence as we have for each other here, how much more reverence and awe we have for our Savior.

Denise

Amen!

Micah

For Jesus. (Micah clears her throat and says) I got to clear my throat (giggle). So, the raw truth today is that freedom is a state of the mind. We have the choice to walk in freedom or be enslaved to sin. The radical grace, is when we fall short of the freedom Christ has given us. His grace enables us to get back on track and to walk in freedom and the real hope is that even though there will be people who try to limit the freedom of others on this earth. God has a freedom for us that surpasses any freedom of this world and lasts for eternity. You've been listening to the Black and White Podcast, where we filter life through the Bible and live life in the freedom of truth.