

COMMEMORATION OF THE REFORMATION
October 28th 2018



[Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

“The Lord will write his law on our hearts”

[Romans 3:19-28](#)

“Justification by Grace through faith”

[John 8:31-36](#)

“Freedom in God’s truth”

Independence Day is an American holiday, the fourth of July.

Do any of you remember the Sci-Fi Hollywood blockbuster, “Independence Day”? A story of alien invasion.

The president patriotically announces to what is left of earth’s fighting force; “From this day forth the 4th of July will have a new meaning for all the world.”

For millions of Lutherans across the world reformation day is our special day.

It is our declaration, not of independence, but of total dependence on God.

It is a day when we claim our freedom to trust in Jesus for our eternal destiny, and, that by grace through faith in Him we are saved and set free.

In a country like Australia we often forget that many people in the world are not free.

Freedom is something many people are willing to die for. "Give me liberty or give me death" was one famous war cry.

What is freedom?

Some people think freedom is being able to do what you want, when you want, with whomever you want.

We discover in John 8 that the Jews considered themselves free. "We have never been slaves to anyone" they said.

Ironically Jews have been slaves to Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, the Seleucid empire: and at the time Jesus spoke these words in John 8; to the Romans.

People delude themselves like that today. They think they are free and would be offended if told they are in bondage.

Is it any wonder people reject Jesus' offer of freedom and salvation.

Is it any wonder people try to do everything themselves and build their own little kingdoms without God's help.

They did that in the first century. The church did it in the middle ages. Aussies do it in the 21st century. We Aussies are so free that we can't see our real bondage.

Jesus makes it clear in his word that we are in bondage to sin. That's the worst form of bondage.

Why? Because it deludes us into believing that we are free when in reality we are in bondage.

St Augustine once said that slavery to sin is worse than any form of slavery.

Here is how it works.

We commit sin to obtain some carnal pleasure. The pleasure passes away but leaves the guilt about sin behind.

We have all experienced that departure of pleasure to find all that remains is the sting of death. Augustine was right, what an evil bondage.

The scary part about rejecting Jesus offer of freedom and choosing to remain in bondage to sin is clear from today's text.

"No slave has a permanent place in the family".

Remember the parable of the rich king who invited people to his banquet? One by one they rejected his invitation. In the end they were refused entry to the feast. How sad.

Those who continuously choose to reject Jesus' offer of freedom will eventually spend eternity in unspeakable bondage.

But praise God! There is emancipation! Jesus has taken our place. A glorious exchange has occurred. Jesus took on our bondage and set us free. His life for ours.

Our chains fell off as he was nailed to the cross.

As his blood flowed for us, sins power was shattered, the slaves were set free.

To be set free we need a greater power than our own efforts.

Remember the parable of the woman caught in Adultery. She was bound in more ways than we might guess.

Her fate was death by stoning. She was powerless to save herself. But a word from Jesus set her free.

“Is there no one to condemn you, neither do I. Go and don’t live as if you were in bondage to sin anymore. You are free, so follow me.”

In that moment Jesus was also looking at you and me and saying the same thing to us.

Listen to Paul’s words in Romans 8:1, 2.

“Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through him the law of the Spirit and life has set us free from the law of sin and death.”

Queen Victoria was once asked to sign an execution order for a man who had committed a serious crime.

“Must I become a party to this man’s death”, she asked.

To her delight she discovered that she had the royal prerogative to exercise mercy and set the man free.

The King of the Universe not only used his royal prerogative to set us free; he saw that justice was also done by paying the penalty for our sin himself.

Friends we are free people. “When the Son sets you free you are free indeed.”

Trust God’s promises in scripture friends. Believe what he says in His word. If he says you are free then you are free.

You and I need no longer fear the future with the loving God on our side.

This freedom we have in him is not freedom to get back into self-seeking sin. It is freedom to serve God.

Abraham Lincoln once set a slave free. The slave responded, "If I am truly free I choose to serve you for the rest of my days."

Jesus says to us, "If you hold to my teachings you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

Our Christ won freedom enables you and me to become willing servants of the one who died to set us free from slavery.

On this reformation Sunday as we focus on our freedom - blood brought for us by Jesus, let's rejoice again that our independence has been secured by our complete dependence on Jesus.