

GOT FREEDOM?

A Quick Recap On Faith So Far:

- Luke 4:14-30 = Hometown doesn't have it
- Luke 5:17-26 = 4 friends have it
- Luke 7:1-10 = Centurion has it
- Luke 7:36-50 = Prostitute has it
- Luke 8:1-21 = Good soil has it
- Luke 8:22-25 = Disciples don't have it
- Luke 8:26-39 = Naked guy with pigs, tombs and demons...has it

Two More Examples To Learn From:

Luke 8:40-56

Faith is:

Much more than a **church** experience.

Much more than an **intellectual belief**.

An **action**, or it's not **faith**.

The key to both **forgiveness** and **freedom**.

Finding Freedom From Our Past:

Luke 8:40-56, John 4:1-42, 1 John 1:9, Romans 8:1-2 & 31-39
Satan: Revelation 12:10, John 8:44, Ephesians 6:11, 1 Peter 5:8

We can't be truly **accepted** until we are truly **known**.

Our past:

Is the **truth** about us.

Will be used **against us**.

Can rob us of our **future**.

Can be God's **greatest tool**.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 20, 2011

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. Can you think of a time when you shared your "story" with someone (or someone shared their story with you) and it either encouraged them to take a step closer to Jesus or reminded them of God's faithfulness or love? If so, explain what happened.

How could your story, even if it's not incredibly exciting, be used to illustrate how much you needed God's grace or encourage others with his faithfulness?

2. In the past few weeks, we've seen Jesus meet the physical and spiritual needs of a lot of different people. Let's suppose you knew you were going to meet someone who had a significant need. What kind of need would you most like to meet? In other words, what resources (if any) or help would you most enjoy sharing with others?

What needs or issues do you feel least equipped to help others with?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. We heard in the sermon that faith acts or it's not really faith, just intellectual belief. What do you learn about how faith acts in James 2:14-26?

James 2:14-26

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? [15] Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. [16] If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? [17] In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

[18] But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. [19] You believe that

there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.

[20] You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? [21] Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? [22] You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. [23] And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. [24] You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

[25] In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? [26] As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. [NIV]

How does Ephesians 2:8-10 compare with what you read in James 2 regarding faith and works?

Ephesians 2:8-10

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- [9] not by works, so that no one can boast. [10] For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. [NIV]

If you had to explain to someone the relationship between faith and works in your own words, what would you say?

2. This weekend, Chris said that faith is the key to both forgiveness and freedom. Three weeks ago in the Growth Group homework, we read Psalm 51 where David came to grips with his past. In Psalm 32, a companion passage, he writes about his experience with forgiveness after he confessed his sin. What does this Psalm teach us about how David felt about his failures, his forgiveness and how God related to him?

Can you think of any ways that experiencing God's forgiveness could help free a person from their past?

Can you think of any ways that experiencing God's forgiveness could make it easier for us to use our stories as a tool for God to use?

3. As mentioned earlier, Jesus met the physical and spiritual needs of a lot of people. Most of us frequently come across people with needs in our daily lives. The challenge is knowing which of these needs “has your name on it” (i.e. knowing if this is something you need to respond to). How can each of the following verses help shape your response to the needs around you?

1 John 3:16-18

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. [17] If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? [18] Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. [NIV]

2 Thessalonians 3:10-13

For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." [11] We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. [12] Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. [13] And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right. [NIV]

Proverbs 28:27

*He who gives to the poor will lack nothing,
but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses. [NIV]*

James 2:1-4

My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. [2] Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. [3] If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," [4] have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? [NIV]

What boundaries or guidelines do you generally follow when it comes to helping others in need?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Does anyone come to mind when you ask yourself this question, "Who could use my help this week?" What can you specifically do to help that person?

2. Is there anything that you're having a hard time forgiving yourself for? Is there anything from this week's sermon or study that could be of help to you in this process?

Prayer Requests:

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