

True Freedom

- **Vs. 32.** These words J have been very influentl in Amer hist. Etched onto wall of orig HQs building of CIA, Cent Intel Agcy in Langley VA, you'll find these words – **vs. 32.** CIA of course seeks to know truth re other nations in order keep our nation free. These words J also quoted by Dr. MLKJ in a 1967 sermon titled, “Why I Am Opposed to the War in Vietnam.” Dr. King wanted listeners to know his views on war, and to think freely for themselves re opposing it. And these words J can also be found across US, engraved on college libraries or used as univ mottos. This passage: motto John Hopkins Univ; on tower building Univ TX, Austin; and on an academic hall at Miami Univ in OH – to name a few. I suppose point: encourage students to seek academic truth, be freed from ignorance.
- But is that what J means when says: **vs. 32?** Is this TF? Can academic pursuits, or political activism, or even national security bring us TF? We're Americans; live in land of free; cherish our freedom. But is the freedom upon which our nation founded, the freedom of which J speaks here? **Vs. 32,** which implies if you don't know truth, then you are not free. So today, as we celebrate Ref, we need ask: what is this truth, and what is TF?
- J speaks these words in mid of heated debate with Jews. They just can't bring selves believe J is Son God. So keep asking, “Who really are you; what are these teachings you're promoting?” J keeps saying: “I come from above, from my Father in heaven. I've come do his will: to bring freedom to this world, save world.” And people are divided; most Jews reject. But some do not. **Vs. 31-32.** Teachings of J are truth that sets you free. In Gos Jn, J teaches, quite often, with picture language. Calls himself temple: destroyed, rebuilt 3 days. You must born 2nd time. He like snake Moses lifted in desert: people looked up, lived; same with him. He gives living water: if drink, never thirst again. Is bread life: if eat him, live forever. Light of world: walk with him, walk in light. So see: J teaches with picture language to teach truth of gos. When says **vs. 31b-32,** his teachings=truth=gos. Those 3 words mean same thing here: tchs=tr=gos. So J teaches truth of gos.
- What is this gos truth J teaches? Again, book of Jn gives us “gos in nutshell:” **Jn 3:16.** That's gos truth! Truth is JC is Son God, who came from heaven, to live holy sinless life (so could give us credit for it) and to suffer terrible death on cross (so could take our guilt away) and to rise from dead (to give us eternal life). That's the truth! Truth is everyone who believes this gos has eternal life in heaven as free gift of his grace – something we could never earn/achieve for selves. That's the truth! That, in nutshell, is truth of gos.
- And this truth sets us free bec w/o gos, we are enslaved. You may be a free American. But w/o J, you're slave to sin. J: **vs. 34.** W/o faith in Xp, you're chained up in prison of unbelief, on your way to dungeon of hell. But the truth of gos which J teaches – the freedom from sin/Satan, guilt/hell – that's the truth that sets you free. That's TF!
- Today we celebrate fest of Luth Ref, and we recall how this TF, this pure gos, was not taught clearly or accurately. Instead of freedom, there was slavery. Slavery to notion that:
 - J hasn't done enough to save you. He got you part way; but you need finish job to earn way into heaven.
 - faith in J not enough to save you; need lots of good works, to make up for all your sins; if don't have enough good works, then heading for purgatory, where you'll stay until you've purged away remaining sins.
 - \$ could buy your salv. You could buy indulgences, bypass repentance, you were good.
 - And there was slavery to whole host of false teachings & mandated manmade practices that did nothing but bind consciences and make people doubt whether they had done enough or could do enough to save themselves. And this graceless slavery locked away pure gos.

- So when Luther and other likeminded reformers returned to teachings of J (to truth of gos), they rediscovered TF! Rediscovered gos truth that sets us free! J has paid for all your sins; J did give life on cross for you; J did come back to life; J is preparing place for you in heaven; J has done evrythng nec to save you; J's work does not need be supplemented with your good works; J works faith in your heart to believe all this true; and J is always there for you, loving you, forgiving you, blessing you. And freeing you. In J you have no-strings-attached gos of sins forgiven that un-handcuffs you from slavery to sin and guilt. And no one can take that freedom away from you. You have been baptized into fam of God; you are child of your Father in heaven and bro/sis to your big brother J. You no longer a slave. **Vs. 35-36**. Through faith in Xp you have perm place in God's family; J has set you free. You have TF!
- So now, what will you, as a 21st cent Luth Xian, do with your TF? Will you consider Luth Ref a 500 yr old archive of ch history that doesn't really matter for you today? Or will you learn a lesson from history, from Jews of J's day and from church of Luther's day: that you can easily lose your gos freedom when you stray from teachings of J? I think our danger today, 500 yrs later, is not that we resort back to teachings of Rome; I don't see that happening among us. But I do think our danger today is temptation to take our gos freedom for granted. Let us never take teachings of J that set us free for granted. If we lose our passion for doctrine of justification, which Ap Paul outlines in 2nd lesson, **Rom 3:23-24**; if we lose our passion for that all-imp teaching of J; and if we show our indifference by rarely coming worship, rarely taking Communion, rarely coming Bible class, rarely supporting work of church – then we run risk of sipping back into slavery.
- But, if we, as 21st cent Luth Xians, hold to/persevere in all J's teachings; if we love/live them; if defend/depend on them; if we faithfully follow J as his discs, as J says here: **vs. 31b-32**. It will set you free from & for. Gos freedom frees you from: sin/Satan, guilt/hell. Also frees you for: a life of serving J; life of thanking/praising God (w/o fear of condemnation), by serving J and by serving one another – just like J taught us to do. Your freedom allows you every day be blessing to those around you. J chos to bless his people thru his people – thru people like you. That's what you're free for.
- **Vs. 31b**. Let's never take our Luth heritage or our gos freedom for granted; instead let's hold to all of J's teachings as his discs. **Vs. 32**. As Americans, freedom is something we hold dear. Our nation was founded on principle of freedom, and many people died to preserve that freedom for us. But it's not the Decl of Indpdc that gives us TF. Nor do academic pursuits, political activism, or even national security bring us TF. No, TF comes only from J, from his sacrifice on cross to pay for our sins. Our faith in Xp is founded on this freedom; and J died to give us this freedom. That's the gos. That's the truth. And it's the only truth that really matters, bec it's the only truth that truly sets us free.

John 8:31-36

³¹ To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

³³ They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

³⁴ Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Romans 3:23-24 – All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.