



One Page Sermon

By Kelsey Ross

June 30, 2024

Truth will set you free

Recap of sermon from June 30, 2024

Guest Preacher: Kelsey Ross

Scripture: John 8:31-38



Our scripture today is an interesting exchange between Jesus and his audience. Because Jesus is looking at them, and he knows that even though they've never been actual slaves, never been actually bound in debt to any master, they haven't lived life in actual chains, working for very little to keep themselves alive, but Jesus knows that even though they aren't actual, physical slaves, they are slaves to something else.

They are slaves to the way things have always been. They are slaves to what they've been taught is right and wrong to the world. They are slaves to a world that hasn't made space for all of who they are.

And if that is Jesus' definition of slavery, then dear church, how many of you feel like you may have been a slave before? Have you ever felt like something about yourself has to stay hidden? As if the world isn't ready to hear it or see it? Ready to embrace it?

Have you ever felt as if your reality, the truth of who you are isn't welcome in any given space? As if, being yourself, your true self, won't be well received? Or, have you ever felt like you had to hide a part of you for the sake of fitting in or being accepted?

Because if you can answer yes to any of those questions, then beloved children in the house of God, you have been slaves.

I cannot discount the gruesome past of our country. I want to make special note of that: nothing can compare to the disgusting history the United States has of enslaving our siblings of color: please hear me when I say that: a metaphorical sense of the word slavery is not meant to diminish the horror of the past.

But this morning, we're looking at the slaves that Jesus was pointing to in the sacred text: the kind of slaves who fall victim to the unfair social norms that people in power have bestowed upon them. This morning we're looking at the slaves for whom, Jesus knew that they were bound by a different kind of chain: the kind that stops you from living your life as your full self: holy and worthy, basking in the glory of all that you are and all that you will be.

And in our scripture for today: Jesus says something profound to them. He says, *you will know the truth, and the truth*

will set you free.

I love that line. I love what it means that Jesus says that. When Jesus looks at those beloved children of God in that place and he says: It's the truth that sets you free, nothing else. You can't live in true and real freedom until you know the truth.

And I don't know about you truth, but I spent around 28 years of my life in a closet, living in there was farthest place from truth that I ever could have been.

It was dark in there, and I wasn't my true self. I was hidden away from what I meant for, living as a muted version of myself. And beloved children of God gathered here today, if that has ever been your experience: I am so, so sorry. Because that's not how the world should work, that's not what Kingdom work is and I am 100% convinced that that is not what God wants for God's creation.

If you have ever been told to hide your truth for the sake of "scripture", "status quo" or the "way things have always been" then you, precious child, have been the victim of the kind of slavery that Jesus was talking about in the scripture so long ago. The kind of slavery that says who you are isn't welcome here. It's not good enough.

True freedom doesn't mean hiding who you are. It means showing up in the fullness of your truth every day.

That's the truth of the scripture today: it's a call to let the people know that if they didn't feel free. If they were slaves to something binding them up in bondage, then they weren't living their truth.

And church, that closet isn't a place of freedom. It isn't a place of truth.

The hiding that so many of have had to do... that's not freedom.

You, as you are, in all your gay, straight, trans, bisexual, asexual beauty, are God's beloved child. May you be clothed in truth this morning. And may you be welcomed into the beloved family of God. The same family that Jesus told the Jews they would be a part of when they knew the truth.

This family.

The family that says, welcome home, weary traveler.

Welcome to this place, where you don't have to hide.

This place where your truth matters.

Welcome home, to a place where all of you is celebrated.

May you know today how beautiful your truth is, and how glad God is that you have found it.

Amen.

Next Week: Beloved Community, Part 2 of 4
The Created Community