

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Great Are You Lord; Blessed Assurance (My King Is Coming); Jesus; Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)

WELCOME

Describe your life during this pandemic using a word picture (e.g. bubble, prison, etc.), and a brief explanation.

WORD

JOHN 8:31-36

³¹So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."³³ They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Last Sunday, we learned that God's desire is to bless us, and the greatest blessing is God himself—a personal relationship with him in which we live a life of worship. As we experience His blessing, our mission is to bless others by helping them experience the same.

But there are things that prevent us from experiencing that blessed life: financial pressures, regrets, insecurities, bad habits, addictions, anger, bitterness, fear, anxiety, and discouragement. They are the lockdowns of life. Ultimately, that one thing that really prevents us from experiencing the blessed life is sin. **Sin is our spiritual lockdown!** Let us look into a conversation that Jesus had with some people (**John 8:31-36**).

Starting in **vv. 31-32**, Jesus was reminding the people who seemed to believe in Him of what it means to be His follower. "Continue" means to abide, remain, make it your home (v.31). **The evidence of being a true believer in Jesus is a transformed life that continues in obedience to the word of God.** "Know" means to know experientially, out of an intimate relationship (v.32). Truth that sets people free is this: **Sin is our greatest problem and Jesus is our greatest hope.**

In **Romans 6:23**, we see an amazing contrast: wages vs free gift and death vs eternal life. "Wages" is something we deserve to get in exchange for what we do. "Death" implies an eternal separation from God, not just physical death. Apart from Jesus, we are separated from God because of sin. Sin is our greatest problem. A "gift" is something we do not deserve; something that someone else paid for; and something we need to accept to possess it. **This free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.**

Continuing in **vv. 33-34**, the people responded that they are: 1) "Abraham's descendants". These people put their spiritual security in their religion or religious heritage which cannot save them. They claimed that they 2) "have never yet been enslaved". They could not recognize, or they refused to admit that sin was locking down their life. Jesus cut to the chase: we are slaves to sin and it is our biggest problem. The truth is: **"The worst enslavement is**

the kind we are unaware of or are unwilling to admit. Such is the deceptive nature of SIN."

2 Timothy 2:24-26 reminds us that as followers of Jesus our mission is to bless others. We are blessed with a relationship with Jesus to help others know Him—to be like Jesus and to represent Him well. We are ambassadors of Jesus Christ and point them to the Savior because only God changes hearts. Only God grants people repentance. The last verse explains why we are slaves to sin. The idea of "snare" is the seductive nature of sin and "captive" gives an idea of a prisoner of war. The devil is real and we are in a spiritual warfare.

Paul further describes that struggle in **Romans 7:15, 17-20**. This means we need to rely on the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ living within us. If not, we will go back to our sinful patterns.

Jesus ended the conversation (**vv. 35-36**) with an interesting parallel. A slave is not part of the family. He has no relationship with the father of that household. He cannot look forward to any inheritance. On the other hand, a son is related to the father. They are related by blood, and that son can look forward to a great inheritance. In Jesus, we become children of God. We belong to God's family. **We are related to the Father by the blood of Jesus.** We have the power to live in victory over sin. We can look forward to an amazing heavenly inheritance. Ultimately, **the Truth is Jesus (John 14:6).**

What does it look like when people have a personal encounter with Jesus, their greatest hope?

The paralytic and his four friends (Mark 2:3-12)

What can we learn about Jesus? Jesus sees our greatest problem—SIN. He knows our greatest need—FORGIVENESS. He alone has the power to forgive sin, and when we are forgiven, we have been set free. What can we learn about ourselves? Sin is our greatest problem. Forgiveness is our greatest need. We can find forgiveness only in Jesus. We who already know Jesus can

WORD (cont'd)

be just like those four friends—helping people come to know who Jesus is.

Woman caught in adultery (*John 8:3-11*)

The important things we can learn in this passage: 1) Jesus, an exalted rabbi (teacher) called her, “*woman*” which is not a derogatory term. It means “ma'am” or “my lady”. 2) Where is justice in Jesus saying “*I do not condemn you*”? She was guilty after all! Jesus was going to take the penalty of her sin upon himself on the cross not very long after this conversation. 3) Jesus, by saying “*Sin no more*” is telling her to do or stop doing something which her new life in Jesus has given her the power to do. Jesus set her free by giving her the power to have victory over sin.

Cornelius (*Acts 10*)

This is undoubtedly a divine appointment for Cornelius and Peter initially (**vv. 21-22**). However, Cornelius invited his relatives and close friends (**v.24**). We can never underestimate how Jesus can open doors for us to tell people about him. We just need to be willing and available. Peter also showed an attitude of humility (**vv. 25-26**). It is such a privilege and blessing to be used of God to accomplish His unstoppable work on earth! Peter's message (**vv.38-40**) to the crowd, including the successful,

upright, and devout man Cornelius is: **OUR GREATEST PROBLEM IS STILL SIN. OUR GREATEST NEED IS STILL FORGIVENESS. OUR GREATEST HOPE IS STILL JESUS.**

In summary, this chart shows how and why Jesus is our greatest hope:

Lockdowns of Life	Jesus, Our Greatest Hope
SIN	Jesus sets us free indeed! (John 8:36)
Financial pressures	Jesus promises provision. (Matthew 6:26)
Regrets	Jesus makes us brand new! (2 Corinthians 5:17)
Insecurities	In Jesus we become God's child. (John 1:12)
Bad habits, addictions	Sin is no longer your master; Jesus is! (Romans 6:14)
Anger, bitterness	Jesus forgave us; forgive others also. (Ephesians 4:32)
Fear, anxiety	Jesus says, “My peace I give to you.” (John 14:27)
Discouragement	Jesus says, “I am with you always.” (Matthew 28:20)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. What is your response to the truth that sin is our greatest problem and Jesus is our greatest hope?
2. How have you experienced finding hope in Jesus amidst the lockdowns of life?
3. What can you specifically do to help others come to know Jesus as their greatest hope?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for everyone who is still on a lockdown in sin that they may be freed from it. Become a blessing to them in any way possible. Share the CCF's Sunday messages on Unstoppable God: Our Greatest Hope.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends